

SMOKESHOP

THE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY ON SPECIALTY TOBACCO RETAILING

SMOKESHOPMAG.COM | FEBRUARY 2019

The Cattle Baron

He's the real deal: Through grit and hard work, he's roped up high-end black angus ranching, built a luxury potato vodka brand, and now has a premium Dominican cigar.

On the Cover: Montana Rancher Bryan Mussard, Cattle Baron Cigars.

Plus:

- New World Luxury Brands debuts with high quality briars and meerschaums.
- Sutliff Tobacco Company hosts its first-annual Factory Tour Extravaganza.
- FDA's harmful constituents reporting plan is a train wreck we all saw coming.



CATTLE BARON

Cigars

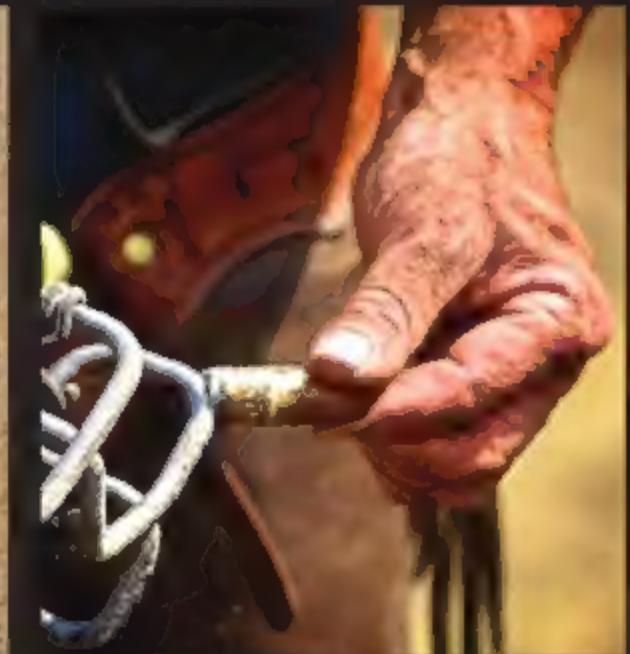
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Cigar Authority: Stockyard **90**

Cigar Coop: Stockyard **91**

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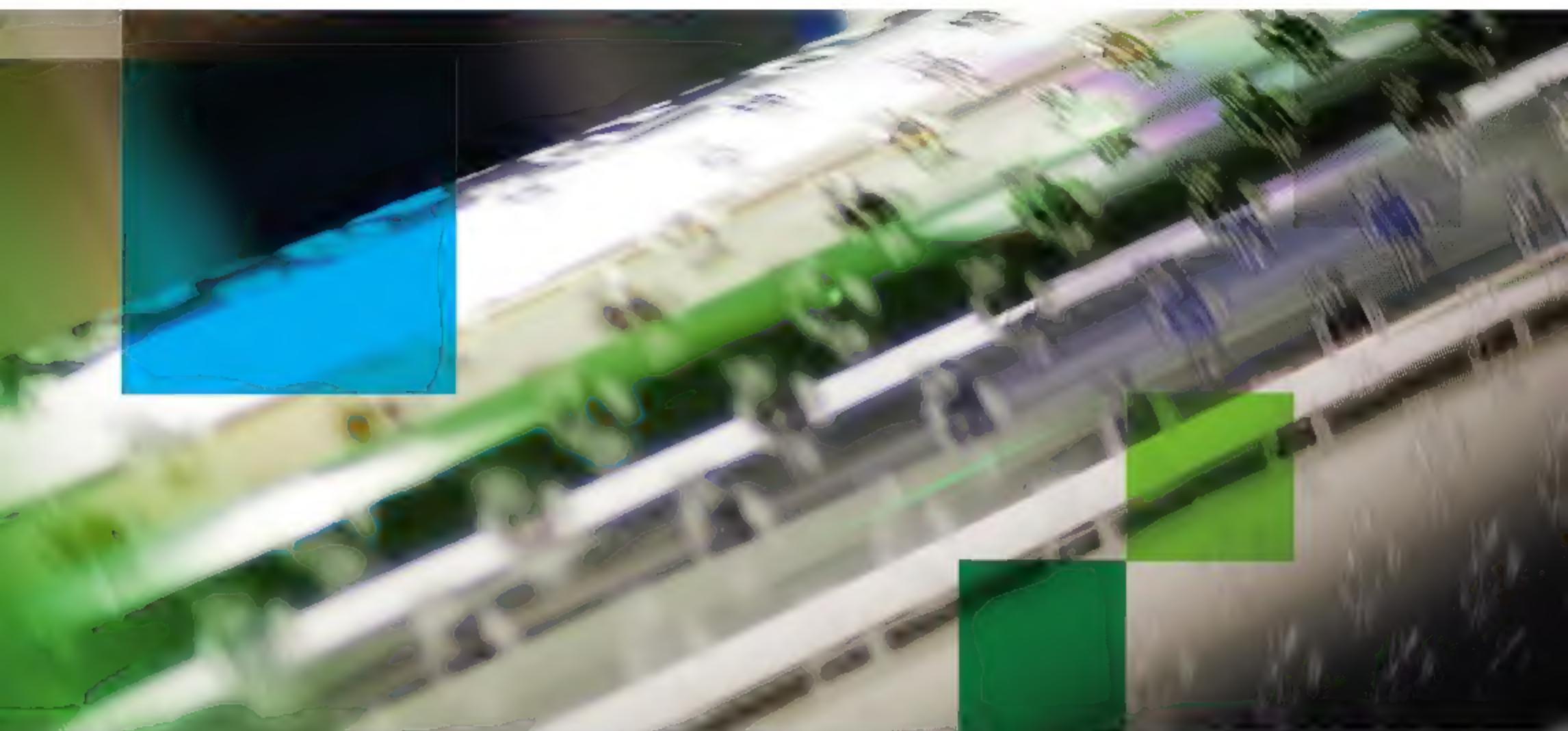


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Editor's LETTER

IPCPR Reports that Member Retailer Holiday Sales Were Up Again for 2018

For a second consecutive December holiday sales cycle, IPCPR retailer members reported increased sales in 2018 versus the same period in 2017.

The annual IPCPR holiday season sales survey asks tobacconists about sales activity in their stores during the week of December 18-24.

- *Was your premium tobacco store(s)' total sales volume over the pre-Christmas holiday week up, down or relatively flat compared to the same period in 2017?*
- *Was your premium tobacco store(s)' store traffic over the pre-Christmas holiday week up, down or relatively flat compared to the same period in 2017?*
- *Was your premium tobacco store(s)' average spend per customer over the pre-Christmas holiday week up, down or relatively flat compared to the same period in 2017?*

Last January, IPCPR gathered the same data comparing the sales week of Dec. 18-24, 2017 versus 2016. The 2017 holiday sales survey indicated 55 percent of retailers increased their sales volume over the same period in '16.

"A strong economy certainly helps sales of premium cigars, pipes and high-end accessories that flourish when consumers have expendable income, but it's always encouraging to see strong sales for IPCPR members for a second consecutive year," said IPCPR President Ken P. Neumann.

While the two consecutive years of total sales volume growth bodes well for premium cigar and pipe sellers, survey results indicate the average-spend-per-customer was down this year.

"It is interesting to note how total sales volume increased for a majority of our members while they simultaneously experienced lower per customer spends," said Scott Pearce, IPCPR Executive Director. The increased sales volume seems to be driven by a slight uptick in store traffic.

This holiday season's reported customer traffic for premium cigar retailers is somewhat surprising, because it differs from the national trend for brick-and-mortar retailers of all kinds. The *Wall Street Journal* and the National Retail Federation both report that 2018 holiday retail sales were up approximately 5 percent over 2017, but this year's holiday season store traffic fell by as much as 3 percent for all retail establishments.

Perhaps big box retailers have suffered more losses to internet sales in the Amazon age than have tobacconists. But the drive to figure out how to sustain brick-and-mortar store traffic isn't getting easier for retailers of all varieties.

This report was provided courtesy of the International Premium Cigar & Pipe Retailers Association (IPCPR)

SMOKESHOP
THE INDUSTRY AUTHORITY ON TOBACCO RETAILING

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Pivat Cigar Lounge Debuts at Agua Caliente Casino Resort

RANCHO MIRAGE, CALIF.—Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa, which is owned and operated by the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, opened Pivat Cigar Lounge to the public on Nov. 6. The high-end cigar lounge, which takes its name from the Cahuilla word for "smoking tobacco," offers casino guests a full bar and lounge serving top-shelf spirits and a small food menu. It features a spacious and well-stocked glass-enclosed walk-in cigar humidor equipped with private lockers and is staffed with knowledgeable cigar servers



available to recommend premium cigar and drink pairings; lush couches; multiple media screens; and a spacious outdoor patio.

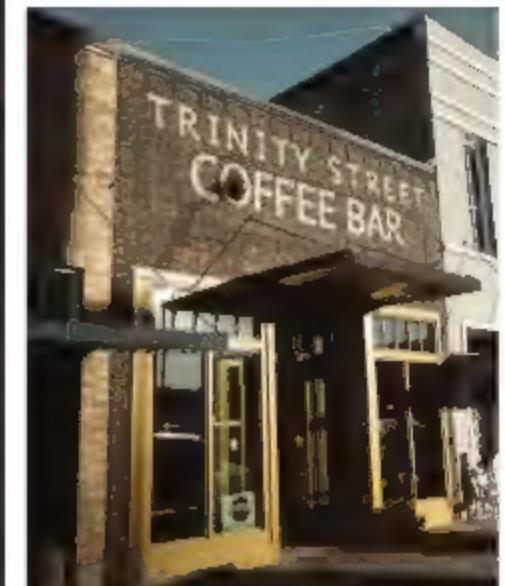
New & Notable

> **Embargo Cigar Lounge** has opened in the North Mountain neighborhood of Phoenix,

Ariz. The Cuban-themed cigar shop focuses on boutique manufacturers primarily supported by mainstream brands, stocked in a spacious walk-in humidor. Humidified locker storage is also available for rent. An indoor smoking lounge features a state-of-the-art ventilation system, and there is also a 1,700 square foot courtyard patio. Later this year the store will open a private members lounge in a separate adjacent building, featuring locker space and 24-7 access.



> **Red Phone Booth** Atlanta, Ga., is expanding its 1920s speakeasy concept to downtown Nashville later this year. While the 5,200 square foot upscale cocktail and cigar lounge will be open to the public, guests will need to secure a secret phone number and dial it into a restored antique London phone booth to gain entry. Housed in a historic building, the lounge will be open daily and offer classic craft cocktails made from fresh-squeezed juices, hand-chipped double-reverse osmosis ice, garnishes cut to order, rare bourbon, whiskey, scotch and Japanese whiskey selections, and over a dozen tinctures, bitters and flavoring agents. Co-founder Stephen de Haan said operating partner Alpha Turner, who has deep roots with family and friends in Nashville, will oversee the new location.

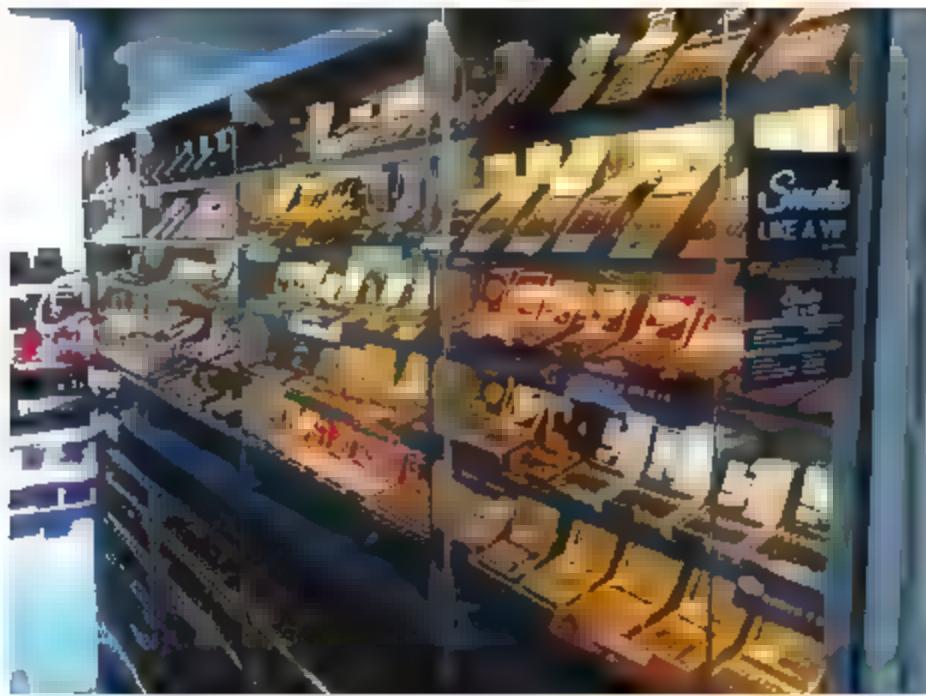


Ezra Zion Opens Second Retail Location

DECATUR, TEXAS—Boutique cigar maker Ezra Zion of based in Alvord, Texas, has opened its second branded retail location: Ezra Zion Cigar Bar at Trinity Street in Decatur, Texas. Ezra Zion co-owners Chris Kelly and Kyle Hoover partnered with the Trinity Street Coffee Bar to bring boutique premium cigars to the historic Decatur Square area.

Ezra Zion hosted a grand opening launch event on October 12, featuring live music, a tasting of the company's own Oak & Eden Whiskey as well as Marker Cellars wines, artisan Trinity St. coffee drinks and cocktails, and Ezra Zion cigars.

Ezra Zion's first branded retail location opened in 2017 in space leased on the premises of the Marker Cellars Winery, a family winery located just outside of Ezra Zion's home town of Alvord, Texas, based in Alvord, Texas, in the LBJ National Grasslands.



► Casa de Montecristo and Mancave Cigar Debut Hallandale, Fla. Lounge

HALLANDALE, FLA.—The newest Casa de Montecristo lounge and cigar store, ■ partnership between CdM and Mancave Cigar, LLC on Federal Highway in Hallandale Beach, Fla., opened January 12. Located in the Village of Atlantic Shores Plaza, the lounge is a key part of the newly built plaza that includes a number of restaurants and retailers. Mancave Cigar's Benjamin Grynbaum also operates the Mancave Cigar Lounge in Fort Lauderdale.

Two separate humidors provide 400-square-feet of climate-controlled cigar display space offering a large and diverse cigar selection, while the rest of the lounge and store feature state-of-the-art ventilation and exhaust systems. A key feature of the lounge ■ a well-appointed bar serving beer, wine, liquor, and custom-made cocktails. A number of large high-definition televisions and comfortable lounge chairs complete the experience.

Luis Miguel Torres, chief executive officer of Casa de Montecristo, said, "This new Casa is a great example of our commitment to partnering with some of the best retailers in the business to create comfortable atmospheres dedicated to the needs and taste of the community."

"Since opening our first location more than a decade ago, Casa de Montecristo remains as relevant to today's premium trends and adult consumer desires as it is to respecting the essence and values of the fabled Montecristo brand," Torres added.



► N.J. Grants Partial Relief for Lapsed Cigar Bar Smoking Exemptions

TRENTON, NJ—A bill allowing cigar bars and lounges in New Jersey to renew lapsed exemptions from the state's ban on indoor smoking was signed into law in December.

Only businesses that have remained in their same physical location since Dec. 31, 2004 and have not increased in size qualify. In addition, the lapsed exemption may not be greater than 10 years old. Finally, the business must have generated at least 15 percent of its gross income from on-premise sales of tobacco products and humidor rentals during the year prior to the original exemption's lapse.

The renewal is effective for a year and can renewed again, providing the business doesn't move to ■ new location or increase its size.

► North Dakota Bill to Exempt Cigar Bars from Smoking Ban Introduced

TRENTON, NJ—North Dakota State Senator Oley Larsen (R-Minot) recently introduced a bill which would amend the North Dakota Century Code to create an exception for cigar bars, and allow for the enjoyment of a narrowly defined set of cigars provided that each establishment meet specific requirements.

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Royal Agio Cigars USA and Avanti Cigar Company End Distribution Agreement

BRADENTON, FLA.—Royal Agio Cigars USA and Avanti Cigar Company are ending their exclusive distribution agreement effective February 1st, 2019.

Royal Agio Cigars USA and Avanti Cigar Company recently made the joint decision to end their exclusive distribution agreement for the U.S. market. Behind Royal Agio's support and strategic guidance, and a strengthened U.S. infrastructure, Avanti will now re-assume all distribution and sales activities for the U.S.

George Margiokla, President of Royal Agio Cigars USA commented, "It's been a pleasure working with the Avanti team and leading the development and execution of new trade programs and a revised product

portfolio strategy that enhances the foundation for their future growth plans. We wish the Avanti team only the best in their U.S. endeavors, and we're pleased to have had the opportunity to help Avanti reach this important milestone."

"We are equally as excited to be able to place a dedicated focus on our growing portfolio of premium blend cigar brands in the U.S. market – Balmoral, San Pedro de Macoris, Panther and Mehari's."

Beginning February 1st, all trade and consumer inquiries for Avanti Cigar Company brands should be directed to Avanti Cigar Company, 200 Keystone Industrial Park, Dunmore, Pa. 18512, Tel: (800) 586-8409.

Ventura Cigar Company Becomes Standalone Business Under Kretek International, Inc.

MOORPARK, CALIF.—Ventura Cigars announced its new status as a stand-alone business unit and full subsidiary of Kretek International, Inc. effective January 2019.

Initially a division of Phillips & King, this reorganization enables Ventura Cigars to focus on their premium tobacco sales channel while building their portfolio of proprietary brands.

Under the new organizational structure, Ventura Cigars will shift to a direct-to-retail model, servicing premium tobacconists. They are constructing a sales team dedicated to offering their products to this channel under the leadership of Barry Bennett, Ventura Cigars' national sales manager.

Phillips & King will continue to play a vital role with Ventura Cigars as their largest distributor and will sell its brands to much of its customer base, along with the over 12,000 other products in their portfolio.

Michael Giannini, general manager of Ventura Cigars, said, "We've come a long way with Phillips and King, but as a standalone company, Ventura Cigars will be able to build out our brands and really put ourselves on the map as a big player in our industry."



"Now we've put the pieces in place to stand on our own and build upon the exceptional work that Phillips & King started.

We've got the people, the products, and now a bigger infrastructure and focus," added Giannini.

Patrick Hurd, vice president of sales for Kretek International, Inc., said, "Kretek will give Ventura Cigars the autonomy it needs to flourish, while providing some of the bigger picture infrastructure like staffing, warehousing, and distributing...I know that this newly applied focus will help them succeed as a serious player in the cigar space. Ventura Cigars has great products and a solid team, and I'm looking forward to being involved with bringing their portfolio to market in a better way."

Over the past few years, Ventura Cigars has successfully launched a number of exclusive brands including Archetype, Case Study, and PSYKO Seven. Now able to fully utilize the horsepower of Kretek's cross-functional resources, Ventura Cigars will be equipped to develop, manufacture, and market their products.



Fronto King Moves to Larger Headquarters

BROCKTON, MASS.—Fronto King, a marketer of natural whole leaf cigar wrappers and other manufactured tobacco products, has moved its corporate headquarters in Dorchester, Mass. to a 12,000 square foot building it purchased in downtown Brockton, Mass., doubling its space.

The company, which was founded in 2009 in Malden, Mass., reports it sold two million packages of tobacco products in 2017. Its leading product is a large whole tobacco leaf, measuring 21 inches long by 16 inches wide, intended to be cut into as many as 20 "cuts" and used for cigars, cigarettes, or pipes, but has a large alternative use following—Massachusetts legalized recreational cannabis in 2016. The whole leaf wrapper is grown, cured, and aged in South Windsor, Conn. by Dunn & Foster LLC. The company also markets a line of flavored cigarillos, available in four varieties.

Fronto King, which says 40–50 of its employees will be moving to the new Brockton headquarters, has also been expanding into foreign markets the past several years, including Europe and Jamaica.

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► Industry Requests Delay of November FDA Deadline for HPHC Testing Results

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Attorneys for the Cigar Association of America, International Premium Cigar and Pipe Retailers Association, and Cigar Rights of America—plaintiffs in a civil lawsuit against the FDA regarding various aspects of the deeming regulations as they relate to cigars and pipe tobaccos, have requested an extension to the November 8, 2019 deadline for reporting of harmful and potentially harmful constituent (HPHC) testing for all cigars and pipe tobacco to FDA. In a joint status report to the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, plaintiffs stated that unless an extension is granted, they will need to bring claims challenging the HPHC testing and reporting requirement. Options include seeking to amend the complaint or filing a separate complaint before the court.

"In the Deeming Rule itself, FDA promised guidance regarding HPHC reporting and a rule providing a methodology for HPHC testing, both well in advance of the November 8, 2019 date," wrote the plaintiffs. "That has not happened. According to the unified regulatory agenda, such a rule is not even in the agency's pipeline. And even if it were published today, it would not be early enough, as the November 8, 2019 deadline is to report the results of testing thousands of cigar types, not to begin the testing itself."

Moreover, the pendency of FDA's premium cigar docket may obviate the HPHC testing and reporting requirements for premium cigars, but that docket will not be completed prior to the deadline."

In Memoriam

Felix Menendez, 74

Felix Menendez, son of Alonso Menendez, brother of Benjamin Menendez, and a life-long cigar maker, passed away on December 14, 2018 in Brazil.

Born in Havana, Cuba, Menendez began working in the family tobacco business as a young teen. Following the Castro regime's appropriation of the family's Menendez Garcia and Cia. factory, owners and manufacturers of Montecristo and H. Upmann trademarks, his family moved to his father's native homeland of Spain. There, the family operated Compañía Insular Tabacalera in the Canary Islands, creating the Montecruz brand, and later partnered with the Amerino family, longtime tobacco growers and processors, to jointly open Menendez Amerino cigar factory in Bahia, Brazil—the source of Amerino's tobaccos.

Menendez Amerino, with master blender Arturo Torano, became a major manufacturer in the Brazilian tobacco industry, creating Alonso Menendez and Dona Flor and building them into global brands, while also establishing export markets worldwide for Brazilian Mata Fina and Mata Norte tobaccos.



►Personnel Moves

> **SI Group Client Services** (Swisher International, Inc.) has named **Christine H. Lanza** as the company's director of government affairs. She is based at the company's new Washington, D.C. office. Previously, Lanza served as director of legislative affairs at the Cigar Association of America (CAA), a position she held for six years.

> **Plasencia 1865**, the Miami-based importer and distributor of Plasencia Cigars products, has promoted **José Luis Plasencia** to vice president.

Previously, Plasencia spent the last five years working alongside his father, Nestor Plasencia Sr. at their tobacco fields in Nicaragua and Honduras, learning all aspect of the production of tobacco. After years of working mainly in the fields, he was promoted to a management



Plasencia

position, overseeing the company's finance department. In his new role, Plasencia will relocate from Nicaragua to Miami to oversee the entire distribution process and business operations for the company and support sales representatives around the country.

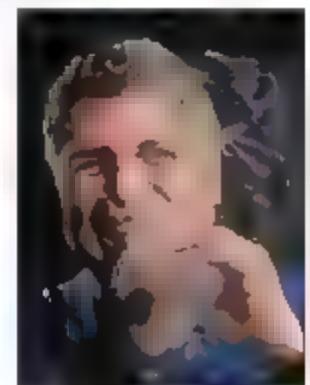
> **The International Premium Cigar & Pipe Retailers Association (IPCPR)** announced it has hired **Lisa Cox, CMP** as its new senior director of trade show & events. Cox brings significant trade show experience to the position, serving most recently as the vice president of events at the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions, where she oversaw 13 meetings and the annual trade show. Cox has roots in the Dominican Republic, is fluent in Spanish and holds a master's degree in Latin American Studies.

> **Cory Bappert** has been promoted to CEO of **Oliva Cigar Co.**, succeeding José Oliva who stepped down from the position in December and has assumed an advisory role. Previously, Bappert

served as vice president, a role he assumed in 2017 following 13 years as vice president of sales at Oliva Cigar.

In November, Oliva was named the speaker of the Florida House of Representatives.

> **Jack Toraño** has joined **Espinosa Cigars** as director of sales effective January 2, 2019. "We have been waiting to fill this role and I am very excited about what Jack brings to the table," said company vice-president Erik Espinosa Jr. In addition to overseeing Espinosa sales representatives and brokers, Toraño will coordinate cigar events and festivals nationwide for the company. Toraño joined the industry in 2011 as marketing manager for Toraño Family Cigars; served as marketing and sales manager at Duran Cigars; and since 2016 was Toraño brand ambassador at General Cigar Company.



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► Calendar

FEBRUARY 11–13, 2019

TPE 2019 (Tobacco Plus Expo International)

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. Tobacco, vape, alternative, and general merchandise show; industry tracks including conferences and round tables. Contact: Trade Show Logic, (attendees) Caroline O'Carroll, Tel: (617) 680-2554, Email: cocarroll@tradeshowlogic.com, (exhibitors) Hilary Manning, (805) 744-4216, Email: hilarymanning@tobaccoplusexpo.com, Web: tobaccoplusexpo.com.

FEBRUARY 16, 2019

31st Annual St. Louis Pipe Show

The Webster Groves Masonic Hall, Webster Groves, Mo.; show hotel Best Western, Kirkwood, Mo. A cocktail and refreshment welcome reception with pre-sales will be held the evening before. Contact: Show Coordinator, pipeshow2019@gmail.com.

FEBRUARY 17–22, 2019

12th Annual ProCigar Festival

La Romana and Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic. Premium cigar festival featuring cigar factory and tobacco farm tours, seminars and tastings, excursions, dinner parties, golf tournament, poker tournament, and charity auction. Contact: ProCigar, Web: procigar.org.

MARCH 17–21, 2019

TAA 51st Annual Convention

Casa de Campo, La Romana, Dominican Republic. Contact: Tobacconists' Association of America, Tel: (770) 597-6264, Email: info@thetaa.org, Web: thetaa.org.

MAY 4–5, 2019

Chicagoland Tobacciana Show

Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, Ill. Pipe and tobacco marketplace, seminars, silent auction. Pre-show opens May 4; 6,000 sq ft smoking tent opens May 2. Contact: Craig Cobine, Chicagoland Pipe Collectors Club, porshcigar@aol.com, Tel: (630) 236-6202, Web: chicagopipeshow.com.

JUNE 29–JULY 2, 2019

IPCPR 87th Annual Convention and International Trade Show

Sands Expo and Venetian Hotel, Las Vegas, Nev. Contact: International Premium Cigar & Pipe Retailers Association, Washington, D.C., Tel: (202) 621-8064 Email: info@ipcpr.org, Web: ipcpr.org.

SEPTEMBER 20–22, 2019

InterTabac/InterSupply 2019

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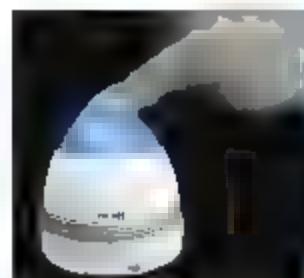


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A New Star is Born

New World Luxury Brands, a new division of Turkish multinational tobacco leaf supplier Star Agritech, seeks to restore high quality, pure tobacco products into the global market. > STAFF REPORT

Incorporated in Singapore in January 2019, New World Luxury Brands PTE (New World) becomes the latest related diversification move by global player Star Agritech International (SAI). SAI was launched in 2009 to service small- and medium-sized cigarette and cigar manufacturers with tobacco leaf worldwide, and the group now has an enviable presence in the tobacco industry on all five continents with sales and marketing offices as well as production facilities.

Its founder and CEO, Dr. Iqbal Lambat, is an industry veteran with over 30 years experience in the sector, having worked for heavy weights Philip Morris, Japan Tobacco International, and in his last corporate assignment with Imperial brands before setting up SAI ten years ago. Over that period, he gained an acute view of the macro and micro changes in the industry, changes such as cigarettes moving from "full flavor" to "milds" and then onto "lights" as manufacturers tampered with blends to accommodate

increasing legislation on lower tar and nicotine delivery as well as blend cost reduction to remain profitable as increas-

> New World Luxury Brands was established to bring back a "quality smoke."

ing excise taxes choked manufacturer margins. In that process, the very core element of the industry—the smoker—got short-changed by products that were no longer "pure."

According to Lambat, cigarettes in the 1980s had an excellent tobacco taste and sensory aroma, delivered a good level of nicotine, and lasted for a relatively longer puff count, making each cigarette an experience. In today's products, the frequent use of tobacco derivatives such as reconstituted tobacco (RECON), dry iced expanded tobacco (DIET), and cut rolled expanded stems (CRES) are all manipulated tobacco by-products which reduce the amount of pure tobacco used to about half of what is in the cigarette stick today. These by-products serve to lower nicotine but are also significantly cheaper than real tobacco, delivering improved product costs for manufacturers. Alas, it also results in an inferior smoking experience: cigarettes that burn faster resulting in a quick smoke with a less than contented smoking experience.

Added to this, the recent launch of heat-not-burn (HNB) products such as Philip Morris's iQOS; British American Tobacco's Glo; and Japan Tobacco International's Ploom are further compromises to typical conventional cigarettes and their apparent failure to attract consum-



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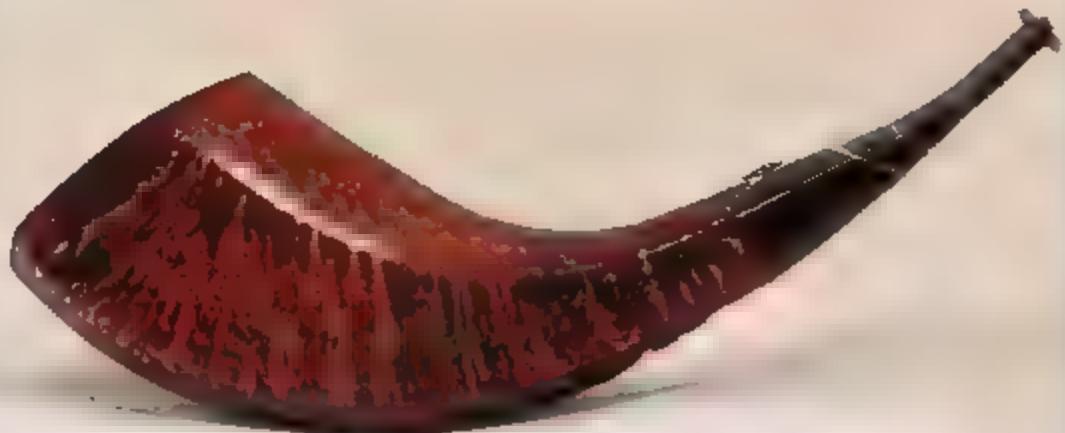
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Selections from New World's signature series of free form pipes crafted from Algerian and Italian briar by artisans in Turkey and South Africa.

ers suggests that manufacturers of these products are out of sync with what the smoking universe of over one billion smokers worldwide want.

The success of certain vape products, such as Juul in the U.S., is a phenomenon that can be discussed only in the context of the U.S. teenage fascination with this electronic device, which fits in perfectly with the world of the iPhone, the iPad, and the addiction to the Internet, Lambat contends.

Against this background, Lambat

says New World was established to bring back "a quality smoke," to be enjoyed (less often) to "full smoking indulgence" and moving away from synthetic tobacco. New World's initial product line strategy sees the roll-out of premium tobacco pipes and cigars in 2019, with high-end smoking accessories to follow.

PIPE DREAMS

While the global market for pipe sales is estimated at 980,000 units per annum and declining, most of these are cheap

pipes that deliver a reasonably good tobacco smoking experience but no special style or pipe character, Lambat explains. But there is significant potential latent demand for pipe fascination—styles of pipes that not only provide a good smoke but are almost fine art in their sculpture.

In this area there are only two regions in the world that produce such products, and in very limited quantities: Scandinavia (with producers such as Ivarsson, Bang, and Nordh, among others) and to a limit-

> New World is also taking advantage of its Turkish artisans, working with native meerschaum.

ed extent, Japan (such as Tsuge). There is of course that product in Alfred Dunhill's Limited Editions such as the Titanic.

New World has been developing similar signature pipes in its ateliers in Turkey and South Africa but at a better product to price ratio. Working only with Algerian and Italian briar, it has created a portfolio of fifty free form pipes that breathe of modernity, innovation, and a rainbow of colors. Engineered by pipe artisans, these products offer an excellent smoking experience during which the smoker can only marvel at the fascinating creativity and sculptural qualities of these pipes. Lambat boldly predicts that buyers of these pipes, with their fresh approaches



The first limited edition set from New World Luxury Brands, the Great African Safari, is sculpted for the safari enthusiast and based on the African "big five" of the elephant, rhino, lion, buffalo, and leopard. It goes on sale later this year.

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A meerschaum Calabash Pipe from New World Luxury Brands, handcrafted from genuine Turkish meerschaum in Turkey.

to design, will "most likely be the envy of their peer group who will have to play catchup to own one soon."

New World is also taking advantage of its Turkish artisans, working with the nation's icon pipe material, meerschaum. Turkish meerschaum is considered to be the very best in the world, which is why there is a government ban on exporting unmanufactured meerschaum out of Turkey; only finished meerschaum products may be exported. New World meerschaum pipes use the very best grades

comprises a set of pipes sculpted for the safari enthusiast and based on the African "big five," of the elephant, rhino, lion, buffalo, and leopard.

New World has already developed limited edition concepts for 2020, which will be unveiled later this year. As good pipe smokers never restrict themselves to one pipe, but many, New World sees good potential in sales of its briar and meerschaum pipes to a target market looking for the unusual and exceptional.

>New World's parent company launched operations in the African nation of Cameroon in 2018 to grow wrapper and filler in the Batouri region in the north of the country.

of material, sourced from the mines in Eskisehir and are offered in conventional styles such as the calabash.

Meerschaum is more easily workable than briar, allowing for a variety of sculptured pipes featuring a range of designs such as faces or animals. Using this attribute, New World has created a limited edition set of pipes to be launched once each year and limited to 100 sets. The first Limited Edition set—The Great African Safari—goes on sale in 2019 and

THE WORLD OF CIGARS

Since Christopher Columbus's discovery of native smokers of tobacco in 1492, the world has adopted the consumption of tobacco in many forms. Perhaps the most exclusive and expensive forms of consumption of tobacco have been in premium hand rolled cigars. Total global cigar consumption is estimated at 29 billion units, of which only 600 million are premium hand rolled, representing a mere 2 percent of total cigar consumption annually.

However, from a sales revenue perspective, the total revenue generated in cigar sales in 2018 is estimated at \$16.2 billion, of which premium hand rolled cigars accounted for \$4.1 billion—a whopping 25.3 percent. And premium hand rolled cigars are projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3 percent until 2025. This important statistic confirms the progressive switch towards "the quality smoke," confirming New World's view of the nature and structure of the future smoking universe.

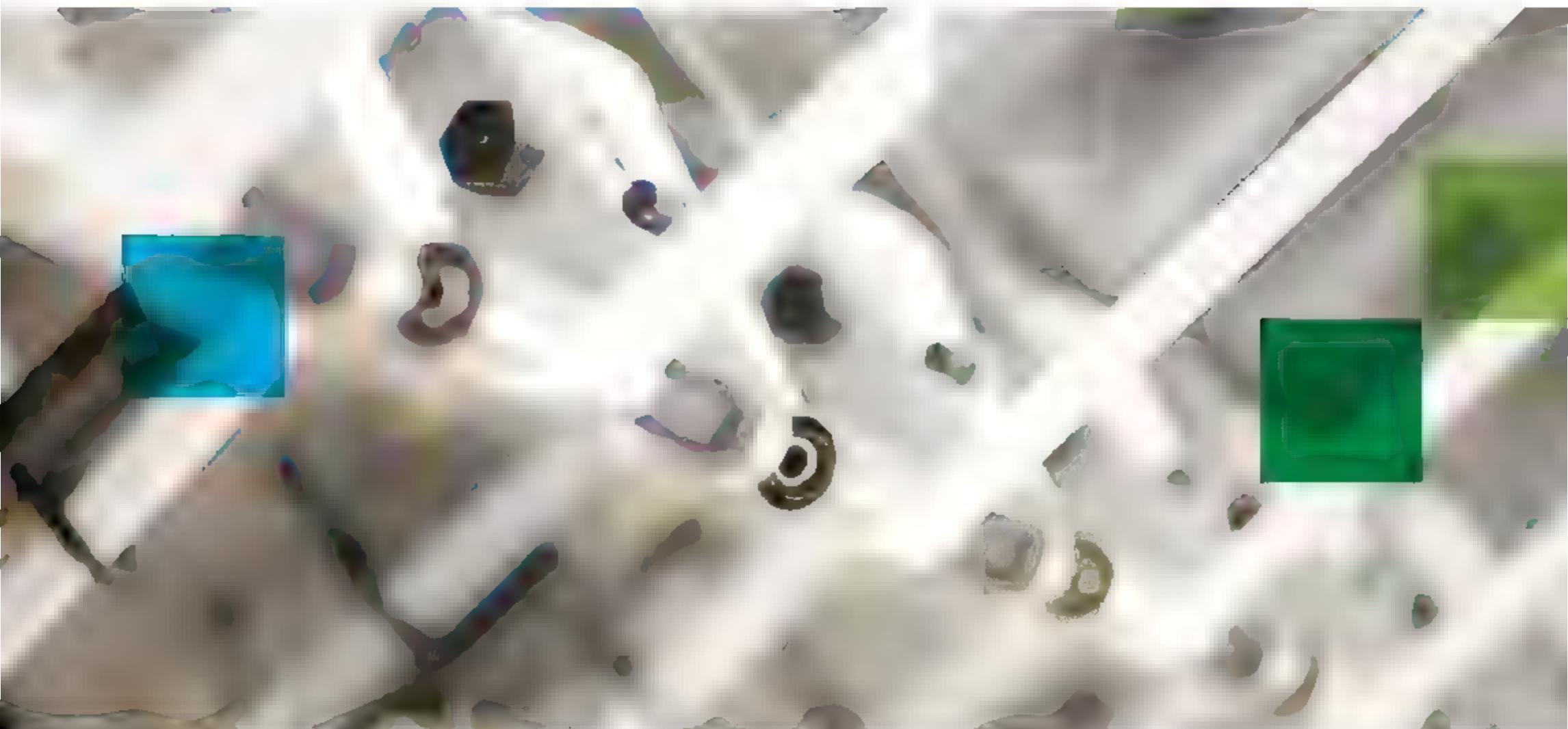
New World's parent company, Star Agritech which already works with cigar leaf suppliers in Indonesia, Cameroon, Nicaragua, and Ecuador, launched its own operations in the African nation of Cameroon in 2018 to grow wrapper and filler in the Batouri region in the north of the country. Cameroon wrapper leaf is considered to be the finest in the world and has been quasi non-existent for the past few years as farmers switched to other crops. Star Agritech also has important sourcing operations for besuki cigar leaf in Indonesia. Indonesian leaf, together with Cameroon leaf and select additions from Central America, will allow New World to produce a range of cigars "blended to pure perfection," says Lambat. Cigars will be manufactured in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua and are expected to be launched commercially in the second half of 2019.

THE NEW WORLD BRAND, GOING GLOBAL

In the tobacco industry, brands are the only thing that matter, accompanied of course by high quality products. New World products will be distributed by premium merchandise distributors and retailers in the U.S., U.K., Germany, Spain, Turkey, Japan, Singapore, and South Africa. New World will also establish legislation allowing for New World smoking lounges in these eight initial markets as a place to enjoy New World products.

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Cattle Barron Cigars

Capturing the Spirit of Big Sky Country

Montana cattle Rancher Bryan Mussard's line of ultra-premium Cattle Baron Cigars, developed with Debonaire Cigars's Phil Zanghi and produced at Augusto Reyes Cigars in the Dominican Republic, were crafted to high standards and Mussard's own personal tastes. If they didn't sell, he reasoned, at least he'd have some of the finest cigars to enjoy himself (he didn't need to worry). > E. EDWARD HOYT

Cattle rancher Bryan Mussard got his start in the beef industry at age 10, borrowing \$400 to buy his first cow. Ever since, he's understood that being "average" just isn't enough when it comes to generating enough revenue to repay loans and grow a business, much less thrive.

"We had to borrow money for everything," Mussard recalls, "and 'average' won't pay that back. You've got to be good to pay the interest." Today, Mussard, along with his wife and extended family, own and operate Reminisce Angus Ranch in Dillon, Montana, and have also tapped their 40 years of ranching

expertise to manage ranches for others.

"I started out on my own in the ranching industry," says Mussard. "My parents didn't have money to give me. We got out of high school, they said, 'Go get a job or go to college, and by the way, you're paying for your home and you're done living here.' When they said 'sink or swim' when we were growing up, we took that seriously because they were serious."

Mussard contends that if he had been born on a big ranch and had lots of money to fund his businesses, he would have missed out on a key component that's driven his achievements.

"If I didn't have to figure it out, if it was just there for me, I wouldn't have learned how to be the best in the beef industry," says Mussard. "I wouldn't have learned what's the best. And so I'm so grateful for that. We've had to figure out how to compete with every other business."

These life lessons Mussard has accumulated in ranching, combined with his penchant for perfectionism, led to the creation of two other business ventures:

the development of a gluten-free craft vodka, followed by the launch of a line of premium boutique cigars. And just like his first childhood business loan, and the accolades he's earned within the beef industry for raising some of the world's finest, high marbling Angus bulls, Mussard takes both of these projects dead serious, applying all of his same high standards.

"When we do something, everything we touch, unless you've got money to just throw around, you've got to be the best or you aren't going to make it," he reiterates.

Mussard coyly admits that his wife may not actually agree with the "recovering" part of his self-described "recovering perfectionist" persona, but he contends that high level of dedication is necessary and ultimately pays off.

"You can't afford to be average anymore. You just can't," Mussard stresses, adding, "you've got to be so strategic."

A big fan of vodka, but dietetically restricted to the very small selection of pure potato vodkas that are naturally gluten free, Mussard decided to fill a marketplace void in 2014 and create an exceptional, top-notch potato vodka. He turned to his like-minded friend, a 28-year distilling veteran at Rigby, Idaho-based Distilled Resources, declaring "I want the best vodka on the planet." His friend warned him it's going to cost him money, but Mussard wasn't deterred; his reputation would be at stake. The same mindset was in play a few years later when Mussard sought to create a premium cigar.

"We raise the best beef on the planet," Mussard offers. "I don't want anybody saying, 'Yeah, they make a good vodka, but their cigars are cheap.' Or, 'Yeah, they've got a great cigar, but they have cheap vodka or beef.'

With few resources to launch expensive advertising efforts, but confident of the quality of his handmade, small batch product, Mussard took an "under the radar" approach to promote his Gorgeous Vodka, primarily through blind tastings and entering it in crowded international competitions, resulting in a wave of accolades (five gold medals) and a slow but steady expansion into stores.



Phil Zhangi, founder, Debonaire Cigars and Bryan Mussard, Cattle Baron Cigars.

Mussard's New York-based distributor, Peter Morales, Blackhawk Imports—a good friend and long-time veteran in his own industry—was initially dismissed by Pennsylvania's state liquor board—the toughest state in the country to get into because it's number one. "What are you doing here," the distributor's contact on the board said. "Go home. These guys will be broke in six months. We're turning down 100 vodkas a week. They have no money behind them. Sorry, no disrespect, but we can't take you."

Over a year later, the board—which is always mining the market for new

products to bring into the state—was surprised to see Gorgeous Vodka was still around, much less winning accolades, and invited the distributor back for another try. Once Mussard broke into Pennsylvania, it gave the brand legitimacy elsewhere in the country. "You mention that to a distributor somewhere else, they'll say, 'Wow. I didn't realize that,'" says Mussard. "If you're in Pennsylvania, then you're legit."

But it was the creation of a unique, cranberry tea-flavored line extension, specifically developed to be paired with fine cigars, which thrust Mussard



Mussard visiting one of the Dominican Republic farms where Zhangi sources his tobaccos. Mussard and Zhangi were quick to realize the parallel nature of their respective businesses: both are highly dependent on the vagaries of nature and both require considerable lead times.

closer to the premium cigar industry.

Mussard has long had an appreciation for fine cigars, and the origins of his unique vodka flavor are entirely personal. "We ranch in Montana, and we lease land scattered out over 250 miles," he explains, noting he'll regularly stop on the road for a bottle of cranberry juice and a bottle of iced tea, mix them together, light up a cigar, and continue on down the road.

"So I wanted to make a really nice sipping vodka that you can either mix, or you can sip on the rocks, or sip neat, or whatever," he says. "I make the only cranberry tea flavored vodka in the world, and it's the first vodka ever made to be paired with a cigar. Typically, people pair wine, scotch, whiskey, or bourbon with their cigars, but there's a lot of vodka drinkers out there."

"No one's ever made a vodka to go with a cigar," Mussard emphasizes. "It's not just an artificially sweetened or flavored deal. It's made with real tea oil and cranberry extract. So it tastes more like ■ brandy." In fact, typical flavored vodka drinkers, those who favor a fruity sweet profile, don't particularly care for it, he admits. His target market is squarely the palates of cigar smokers.

Mussard's home-grown effort to promote his vodka included enlisting his daughter and sending her out on the road to California. "Go into every

cigar shop that you pass by, tell them your dad made this for them, and they'll laugh at you...until they try it," he recalls telling her. It was on that trip that she met Danny Sinclair, the business partner of cigar maker Phil Zhangi of Debonaire House—precisely the type of introduction Mussard was looking for to explore his interest in making a cigar.

CONNECTION MADE, A FRIENDSHIP AND MEETING OF THE MINDS

Mussard and Zhangi began chatting, and it wasn't long before the Montana rancher was in the Dominican Republic visiting the founder and former co-owner of Indian Tabac Cigar Company to see firsthand how cigars are made. The two hit it off right away, noting their similar approaches to their businesses, both catering to high-end markets with their respective ultra-premium products. But Zhangi, who leads his own growing portfolio of Debonaire and Indian Motorcycle cigars, was hesitant to take on a new project. Like Mussard, he's wary of committing unless he can do it right, and private label brands are not part of his business mode. As the two became better friends, Zhangi realized he needed to view the rancher's world for himself. "I have to come see what you're doing," Zhangi recalls telling Mussard, "Because you're a real

person." The only way he'd take on the project was to visit Mussard's ranch in Montana first, Zhangi concluded.

Mussard had a small hurdle to cross. "He wanted to kind of feel us out," grins Mussard, "because he wasn't interested in doing a blend for somebody else."

And what an eye-opener it was, Zhangi recalls. Having already recognized a long series of parallels between the two men's business approaches, the nature of the businesses themselves, and their personal lives, the trip revealed even more similarities. "It was something really special," says Zhangi, who covered 1,100 miles of ranch land in Montana with Mussard and his crew in the course of a week, including an entire day riding horses. "These guys are real cowboys," exclaims Zhangi, who rode regularly in Honduras and Nicaragua back in his Indian Tabac days. "That's not an outfit," he adds of Mussard's cowboy hat and boots; "it's not a costume!"

From the ranchers' work ethic (up at 5 am every day), to their skills roping 3,000 pound bulls, to the enormous responsibility of tracking down thousands of cattle wandering across millions of borderless acres of land, Zhangi was immensely impressed with the family's hard work and how most days ended by kicking back and sharing cigars. Zhangi, who doesn't do private label work, was convinced:

"These are real people. I'm going to do it with them. I want to put time into it."

Much like tobacco growers are at the mercy of nature, ranching has its own variables, notes Zhangi: there are no guarantees that the years invested in head of cattle or a tobacco plant will result in market success. "I saw he's a serious man and he takes that passion and puts it in his business," explains Zhangi. "And then he wanted to make cigars, so I put my passion in and helped develop it for him."

ZHANGI & MUSSARD: CREATING THE CATTLE BARON CIGAR

The historic term for influential stockmen who owned vast ranches and large herds of cattle, the "cattle barons," was a fitting name the chose to anchor the project.

Zhangi says that creatively, Cattle Baron cigars are all Mussard's—"I helped him, but it's all his," he explains of the two-year process that started with a round of samples shipped from the Dominican Republic, followed by more samples: lots of back and forth, but not much progress over time. Mussard is a big fan of Montecristo No. 2 and, more recently, of Zhangi's own Debonaire, which he describes as "the greatest cigar in the world," two cigars that initially helped identify Mussard's preferred taste profile, but like most blenders, Zhangi doesn't set out to replicate, nor does he have "stock" blends set aside for private label brands. His efforts in creating Cattle Baron were no different than the process he embarks upon in developing his own Indian Motorcycle cigars or Debonaire blends. It's an art he learned years ago in Danlí, Honduras from the late cigar maker Pedro Martin of Tropical Tobacco.

"I look at the materials I have, that I think are the best that we have to offer. The desired profile somewhat guides where to look," Zhangi explains. "You want light, full, or medium? That's where I start."

"I'm not going to copy anybody's cigars, but there's nuances, 'mental flavors' that people have in their head. 'What did you like about that cigar?' I'll ask. 'Oh, I liked that it was a little spicy, or it was a little creamy. Or, like my Debonair, it's more beefy.'"

Zhangi then smokes the pure leaves, identifying the best materials that have

been aged three or four years. "Always Habanos first," says Zhangi, "I'm always Habanos—I like the Dominican or the Nicaraguan. Those, together, blend better than anything." Zhangi will smoke each one "raw" (by itself) to identify its principal nuances—woody, creamy, floral, perfumey—and mix two complementary leaves together at a 50-50 ratio, smoke the pairing, and begin to adjust from there, changes proportions or components ■ profile ■ "too floral," or "not creamy enough."

Once established, he'll select the binder. "The binder's crucial to me, because that holds it all together and that's kind of the combustion point," says Zhangi. "I like San Vicente a lot. I use a lot of Mexican *marron*; it gives it a little sweetness, it gives it a little strength. When that's all done, you're in the raw, and then you pick your wrappers."

Zhangi always develops a 'core blend' for a line, one blend that fits in all wrappers, "because why go back to the drawing board," he asks, puzzled by cigar makers who create new blends every year. "Why? People love the blend you have. Put another wrapper on it. Change the binder. But don't go to the core. I never believed in that."

But after nearly two years of trying back and forth samples, Zhangi said the process simply had to be done in person, advising Mussard, "You have to come down here and spend a

week with it." For Mussard, who's had a 30-year appreciation for cigars, the experience was an astounding eye-opener, as is so often the case. Unlike most premium cigar makers, though, Zhangi has the benefit of being able to show visitors an entire range of tobacco processes in dozens of forms, from mass market up to the ultra premium Debonaire operations. It's that incredible contrast, showing all the care and selection that goes into the crafting of premium long filler cigars and how they differ from mass-produced products that really illustrates why premium cigars are so special.

"The first two days are me showing primary processing, fermentation, aging, grading, sorting, selection, thrashing...all the grandeur," explains Zhangi.





"And then we end up back at the premium factory and then I say, 'See, that's why it's a premium. That's why it's a long filled, premium cigar. You saw that same tobacco in many forms, from sheet to homogenized, all the way to short filler and to machine made. All that other stuff isn't bad... it's what it is. But this is premium. This is why it's something special. This is why it's smokable sculpture," a term that Zhangi may have singularly coined.

Mussard says it was that experience that really altered his quest for creating a fine cigar, recalling the bales of aging tobacco that Zhangi would strategically open, grab a handful of leaves and breath deep their aroma, roll one up, cut it, light it, and smoke it on the spot to

Mussard and his wife, Marcia. The Mussard family owns and operates Reminisce Angus Ranch in Dillon, Montana, raising some of the world's finest, high marbling Angus bulls. They also make the award-winning, gluten-free, Gorgeous Vodka, a potato vodka. Most recently, Mussard teamed up with Debonaire House's Phil Zhangi to create Cattle Baron Cigars.

assess its appropriateness ■ blend component. Zhangi tweaked over a dozen final blends, and after two years declared, "All right boss, this is it. You're going to find something on this table."

Mussard picked up what would become the Cattle Baron Trail Boss, lit it up, and knew instantly he had found his blend. "We're done. That's it," he said, noting Zhangi made him smoke through all the other samples none-the-less. Mussard's call stood.

Zhangi describes Cattle Baron as ■ medium-plus blend, very well balanced, with a "deep richness of a little bit of, I'd say, dried fruit," he offers.

Mussard concurs: "It's got a raisin-like, nutty flavor to it. I don't like really super strong cigars ■ lot. We don't smoke cigars for the nicotine, so I don't want ■ cigarette. And I've also smoked a lot of mild cigars where there's no flavor to them at all."

With the blend set, Zhangi just needed the go ahead to roll. "You've got to

order 25,000 cigars," he advised. "Wow, how's that going to happen?" Mussard thought. "I have friends that smoke cigars, they're all ranchers, and they pitched in a little bit and we went in together, and we made them."

Developing Cattle Baron's persona—the packaging and the bands—proved to be another meeting of the minds. The horse that's featured on the band is the one that Zhangi rode during his Montana visit. "And the mountains in the background are the Montana-Idaho border in the field that he was riding at," says Mussard, adding, "Phil really was behind the band and coming up with that idea." Both love old, early Americana themes, so Zhangi channeled the imagery of old Western frontier towns, modeling the box after an old wooden ammo box and the brand's lettering like the gilded art of old western saloons.

Mussard includes ■ letter on the inside lid of each box of cigars. "The top paragraph kind of shows our challenge,

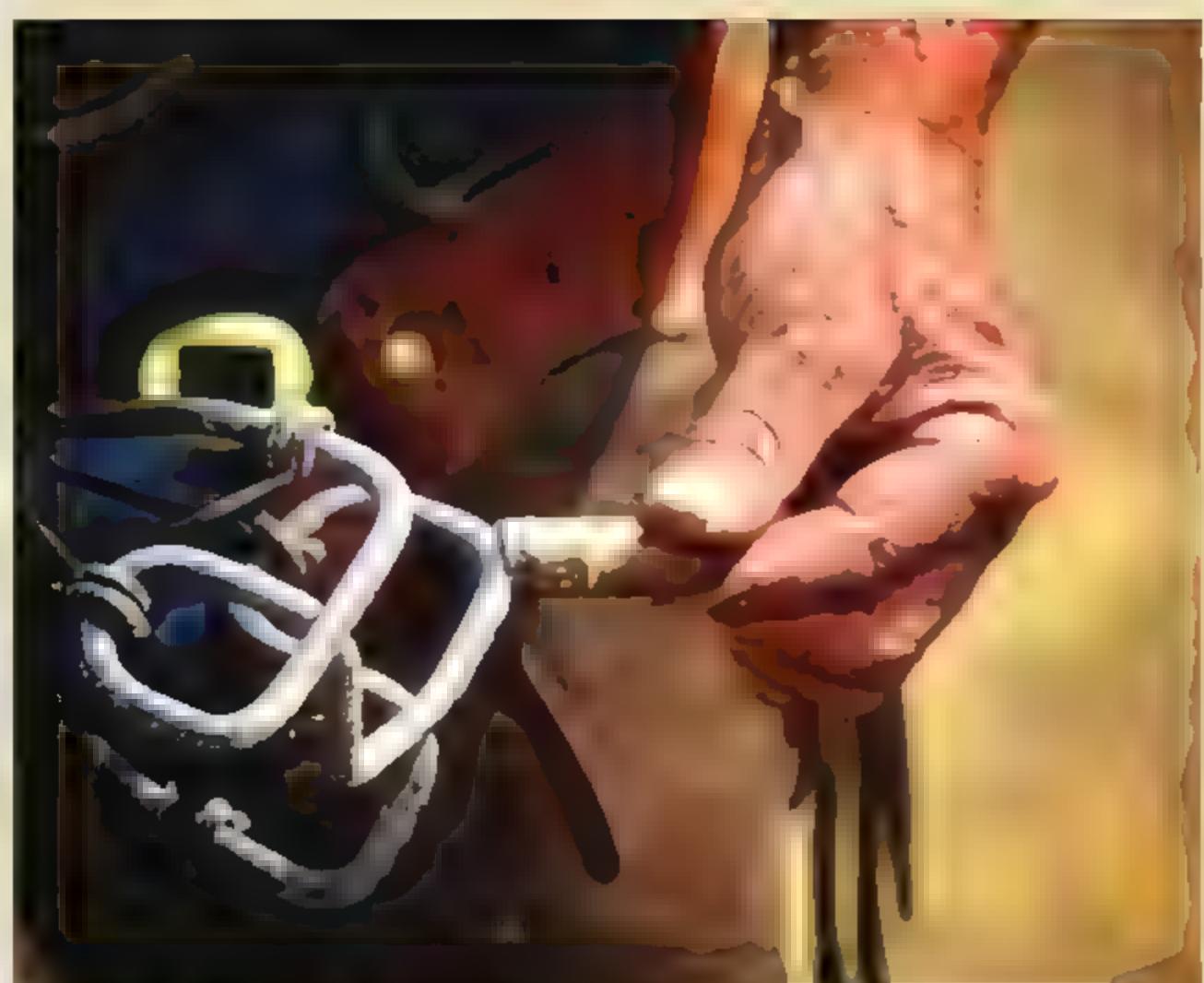
or what our way of life is and what it takes to be a rancher. And then the second paragraph is what it takes to make cigars. And the parallels are absolutely amazing," says Mussard. "They're so close to each other. I mean, you're two years from the time you start out to the time you're smoking the cigar. And you're two years from the time you breed a cow and you have something for market."

Zhangi, whose has developed hundred of blends over the years, found this project one of the more unique and satisfying ones to date, attributable entirely to his appreciation of Mussard and his family business. "I've worked my butt off on the blend. I worked my butt off on the packaging," Zhangi enthuses, noting that Mussard ultimately approved every step of the project. "We had to agree on what it was and the vision he liked. I thought we were both on the same page and I admired it. I think we did an amazing job with it. I think it came out well. And it really portrays what [Bryan's] trying to portray more than anything."

Cattle Baron debuted at the 2016 IPCPR Trade Show, featuring a combination of Dominican seco and Nicaraguan viso fillers, a Dominican binder, and a Nicaraguan Habano wrapper. It initially launched in four sizes—Trail Boss (6 x 54), Stockyard (5 x 52), Bull (4 1/2 x 58), and Cowboy (4 1/2 x 44). Although Mussard has no intentions of continually expanding the line, a fifth size, Little Doggie (4 x 36), was added in 2017 and a maduro version is planned. All sizes are presented in slide-top cabinet-style boxes with self-displaying lids. And, much like Mussard's experience with Gorgeous Vodka, Cattle Baron cigars have seen no shortage of 90-plus ratings from the industry's often fickle crowd of cigar blogs and flashy magazines.

Zhangi periodically ships Cattle Baron cigars to Mussard in Dillon, Montana, where they continue to age, and from there the small family sales force that markets its steaks, hamburgers, and jerky has taken on the additional role of building awareness for the brand. "We're a small company, so we don't have people out there on the road," notes Mussard.

For Mussard, the journey of adding craft vodka marketer and boutique cigar



Cattle Baron's Box Lid Message to Customers

When you start out on a trail with a herd of cattle, there's no turning back. There's a unique job to be done and it has to be done right. A good horse, a good stock dog or two, and some salty cowhands are essential to see the job through. High water, bad weather, and uncertain range conditions are just a few of the challenges the Cattle Baron endures, prior to delivering these high-quality cattle to market. We are very particular about our cattle. Only the highest-quality genetics can endure the challenges of the cattle industry and become the finest beef in the world.

Cattle Baron Cigars are made with the same bold integrity and respect to quality and tradition. We started with the world's finest tobacco, grown in the rich soils of Santiago and the surrounding regions of the Dominican Republic. These premium cigars are handcrafted by the finest cigar family in the business, for the most grateful aficionado of life.

Enjoy the Cattle Baron Cigar on the trail, at the end of the day, or with a good steak. Where ever you are in life, we say "cheers to you, your dreams, and your time to sit back for a moment and enjoy them."

Sincerely, The Cattle Barons

owner to his life-long role as cattleman and rancher has been a natural extension of his drive to always do the best job possible. "We enjoy it," he says of his businesses and his hard-working family. "If you're going to do something, why not do it right. If we had made an average, or just another cigar, shoot. If at the end of the day you've got to smoke them all because you can't sell them, I'm going to smoke a good one; I'm going to enjoy them all. If I've got to drink all the vodka, I want it to be good. If I've got to eat all the steak..." Mussard trails off

with a big smile on his face. In truth, his products are held in high esteem in each of their respective industries, but due to the nature of the cattle business, regular salaries aren't a guarantee.

"You don't always get a check, so at the end of the day sometimes a good meal is what you get," he says, and the Mussard family can always count on that. ■

Mussard and Company LLC / Cattle Baron Cigars, Dillon, Montana, Tel: (406) 683-6363, Email: info@cattlebaroncigars.com, Web: cattlebaroncigars.com.



Sutliff's 2018 Factory Tour Extravaganza: Made in the USA Pride

America's oldest pipe tobacco manufacturer hosted its largest group of consumers ever for a day of tours, education, camaraderie, and fun.

Sutliff Tobacco Company held its first annual Factory Tour Extravaganza on September 28th, 2018 at its Richmond, Va., headquarters and manufacturing facility. The company admitted it wasn't quite sure how well it would go over or be received by guests since it was the first time they'd ever held an even of this size. The guests, after all, were pipe enthusiasts who were in town for the reboot of the Conclave of Richmond Pipe Smokers (CORPS) annual expo and registered in advance for the tour. In the end, staff shouldn't have worried: suffice it to say, the day was judged "an amazing hit," with an outpouring of positive feedback from those who attended and an undeniable sense of pride among the workers at the nation's old pipe tobacco maker.

In all, 88 pipe-loving consumers from all over the U.S. joined Sutliff staff for a day of touring, information gathering, tobacco exploration, testing of established and new products, and just some good old fashioned "fellowship" with other pipe tobacco enthusiasts. The event also attracted some industry notables includ-

ing Mark Ryan of Daughters & Ryan; Russ Oullett of PipesAndCigars.com, Jim Amish, known in the blogging world as JimInks; and Sutliff's very own retired master blender, Carl McCallister, who created the Count Pulaski, Blue Ridge Apple, and Walnut Knoll Lane blends, to name just a few.

Sutliff employees Michelle Moran and Lisa Asbury welcomed guests with t-shirts and goodie bags full of items to use throughout the day. Villiger Cigars even provided guests with a sample of each of their award winning La Flor de Ynclan and Cuellar hand rolled cigars.

Jeremy McKenna, President of Sutliff, led tours of the entire facility, from tobacco processing, flavoring, blending, aging, and packing. During the event, guests had the chance to make their own blend during a blending session. Thirteen various blending components were available for each guest to create their own special blend. Those who felt confident in their masterpieces submitted their recipe in our random-draw contest. Five blends were randomly selected

to go on a "test trial" at the CORPS Pipe Show that was held the following day, on Sept., 29th in nearby Chester, Va.

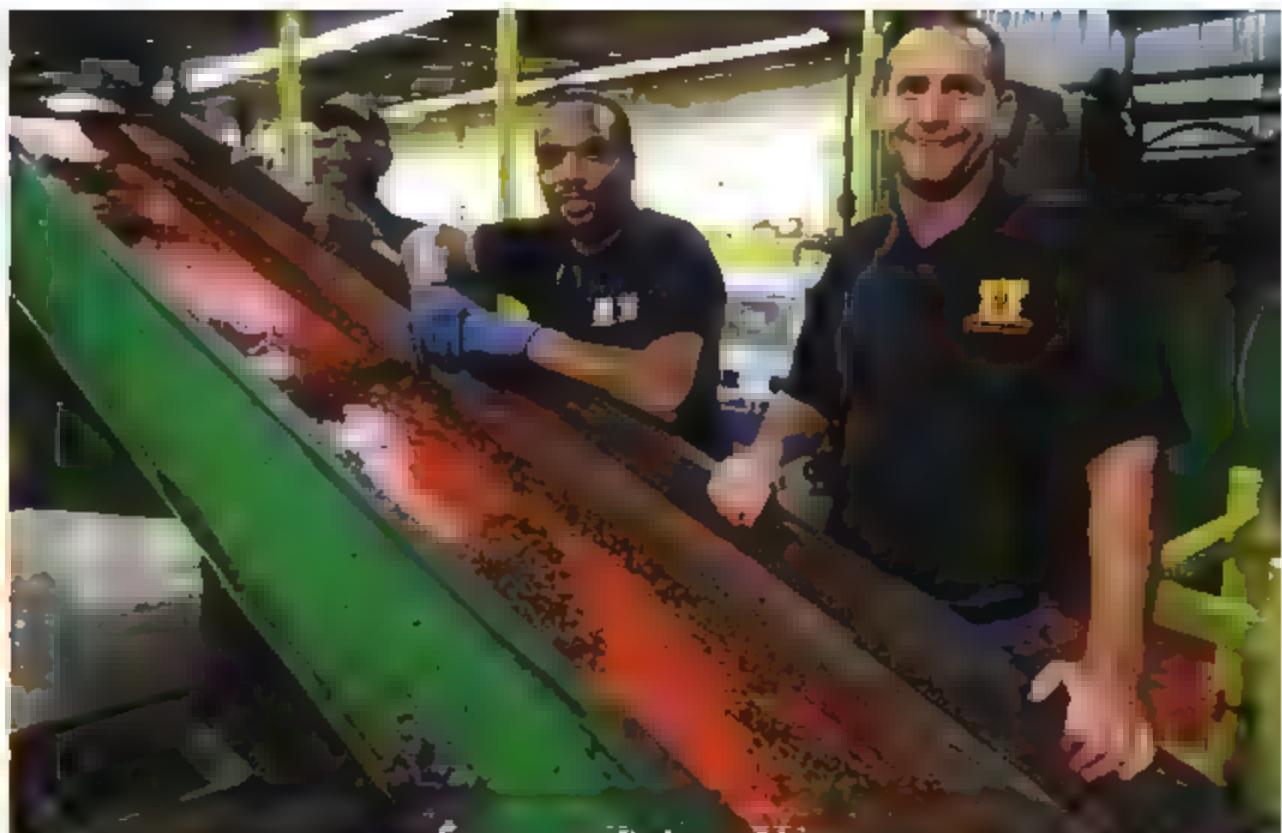
After the tour event was over, Sutliff staff quickly blended 3 pounds of each of the five recipes for attendees of the CORPS Pipe Show to test and vote on. The winner, Jason Howell, submitted a blend he called "Not Virginia," which contained no Virginia, but rather was an intriguing blend of long cut and granulated Latakia, toasted Black Cavendish, Smyrna grades Turkish, and White Burley. Guests truly enjoyed the blend and Jason will become the proud owner of 80-90 pressed Not Virginia tins for his personal enjoyment.

In support of the Hurricane Florence relief efforts for Sutliff's neighbors who were devastated by the powerful storm, the company sold raffle tickets during the

Above left: Sutliff president, Jeremy McKenna, leads a tour group through the factory's packaging area. Above right: Lee Rogers, who has been with Sutliff for 17 years, seen spreading tobacco in preparation for the flavoring process.



Director of logistics, Kevin Dinkins, with Seth of Aristocob, answering questions and explaining more about the process. Lee Rogers; Jeff Conner Sr. of the blending department; and David Dohrmann, facility engineer who "keeps everything running in the plant." *Inset:* Bales of tobacco were opened for guests to check out.



tour event as well as at the CORPS Pipe Show. Sutliff was proud to have sent a check to Samaritan's Purse in the amount of \$565. The winner of the raffle, Jon Henderson, won a Vintage Series pipe pouch, pipe, and pipe tool donated by Sutliff distribution partner, Brigham Pipes and Accessories, and a few advance tins of the company's new Crumble Kake pressed tobacco series.

Sutliff partnered with local brick and mortar retailer Havana Connections to allow discounted retail sales of the company's products during the event.

No sooner was the tour a memory when plans were already underway for Sutliff's Second Annual Factory Tour Extravaganza. "We have the greatest consumers in the industry and we were so humbled by how many came from all over the U.S., from Tennessee to Texas, from Washington to West Virginia, and everything in between. It was an honor and joy to have opened our home to so many for a wonderful day of fun, friends, laughter, learning, and of course great tobaccos," the company concluded. ■

Guests had the opportunity to select from a plethora of blending components to create their "own blend." Inside sales rep, Lori Hay, vice president of operations, Jonathan Wood; Anne Dinkins, inside sales manager; and guest Dave Grant.

Dinkins and accountant Tracy Harris were on hand to check guests in and collect the FDA required fee for samples.





Apple Store.

What it Takes to Win in Retail in 2019

A look at the top trends driving retail store growth in 2019.

While the vast majority of premium cigar retailers are family-owned businesses or other small partnerships, there's no denying the wave of sophisticated big-budget players. The advent of sleek cigar shops and lounges, backed by some of the largest premium cigar makers in the industry including Imperial Tobacco (Montecristo USA), Scandinavian Tobacco Group (Cigars International), and Oettinger-Davidoff (Davidoff of Geneva USA), suggests it's no longer a stretch of the imagination to dissect the retail tactics of these well-armed giants who tap some of the best retailing consultants that money can buy. But whether big or small, sophisticated or home-grown, guided by innate sense of consumer needs, premium tobacco retailing at brick & mortar is increasingly experiential. Looking at trends throughout retail in general is a revealing exercise.

Retail Store Tours, which explores worldwide trends that are driving the changing face of retail, has identified the top trends affecting retail in 2019.

"In curating hundreds of stores and retail formats in the last year," said company founder and CEO Dan Hodges, "we discovered the winning factors in retail today, including employee training, retail environment, use of technology, business model, store design, customer management, brand story, unique concept, the human touch, and change."

What follows is a summary of the company's findings.

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Apple Stores hires sales associates based on their kindness and evaluates them based on customer empathy. Microsoft retail hires sales associates who are both entertaining and informative. It is noteworthy that two of the leading technol-

ogy retailers are focused on the human touch as a business strategy.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Customer engagement technology that interacts with shoppers in-store is a winning play. Sephora's Color IQ allows a shopper to select make-up while looking at themselves with Color IQ in-store. Apple's sales associates use customer management software that increases responsiveness to customers, resulting in satisfaction and more time in the store. Sales Associates who are knowledgeable in product and empathetic to customers are the winning in retail stores today.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Apple, Sephora, Tiffany and other leading retailers are constantly training their employees to update their product knowledge and people skills. They use a combination of daily questions and formalized classroom training.

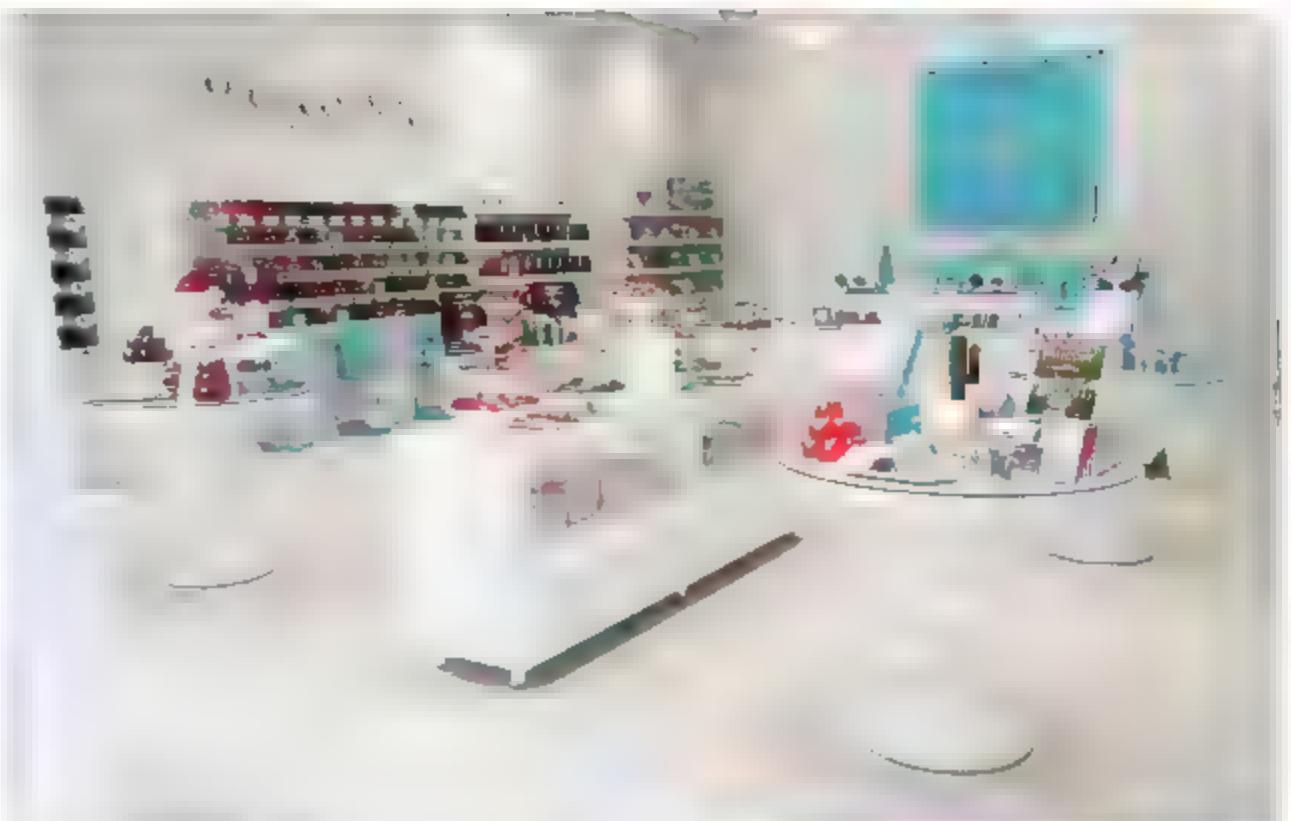
BUSINESS MODEL

Companies focused on personalization and customization are winning in the marketplace. Two examples are Bonobos, which is an in-store showroom where men are helped to select clothes with in-store stylist and UntuckIt which

is a business where the shoppers are styled and sized in the store using a number of pre-sized shirts.

STORE DESIGN

The Apple store design features a minimalist approach which is a highly engaging environment. The Ray-Ban store is a multi-experience store where you can have your eyes examined and select a custom frame personalized to your taste. The Sonos store uses sound and environment to create an immersive sound experience. Sephora uses the store experience augmented by technology which is integrated into the store design.



CUSTOMER MANAGEMENT

All tier one stores have store associates who use the personal touch combined with technical tools to engage and co-create the shopping experience. Aldo uses technology to connect the front-end sales associate tools with the back-end inventory. Aldo utilizes in-store technology where customers can engage directly with the products in the store and curate the styles and inventory themselves.

BRAND STORY

All winning retail stores have a unique brand DNA story that was born out of a

Sugarfina, "the ultimate candy store for grown-ups." UntuckIt, one of the fastest-growing retail brands in the U.S. which opened its 51st retail store in January.

market need or a visionary founder. Tiffany, Sugarfina, UntuckIt, B8TA, Warby Parker, All Birds, and Amazon are some examples of the many brands that have a unique reason for being.

UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION

The Real Real, B8ta, Everlane, Alo Yoga, Brooklinen, 3x1 and The Apartment are

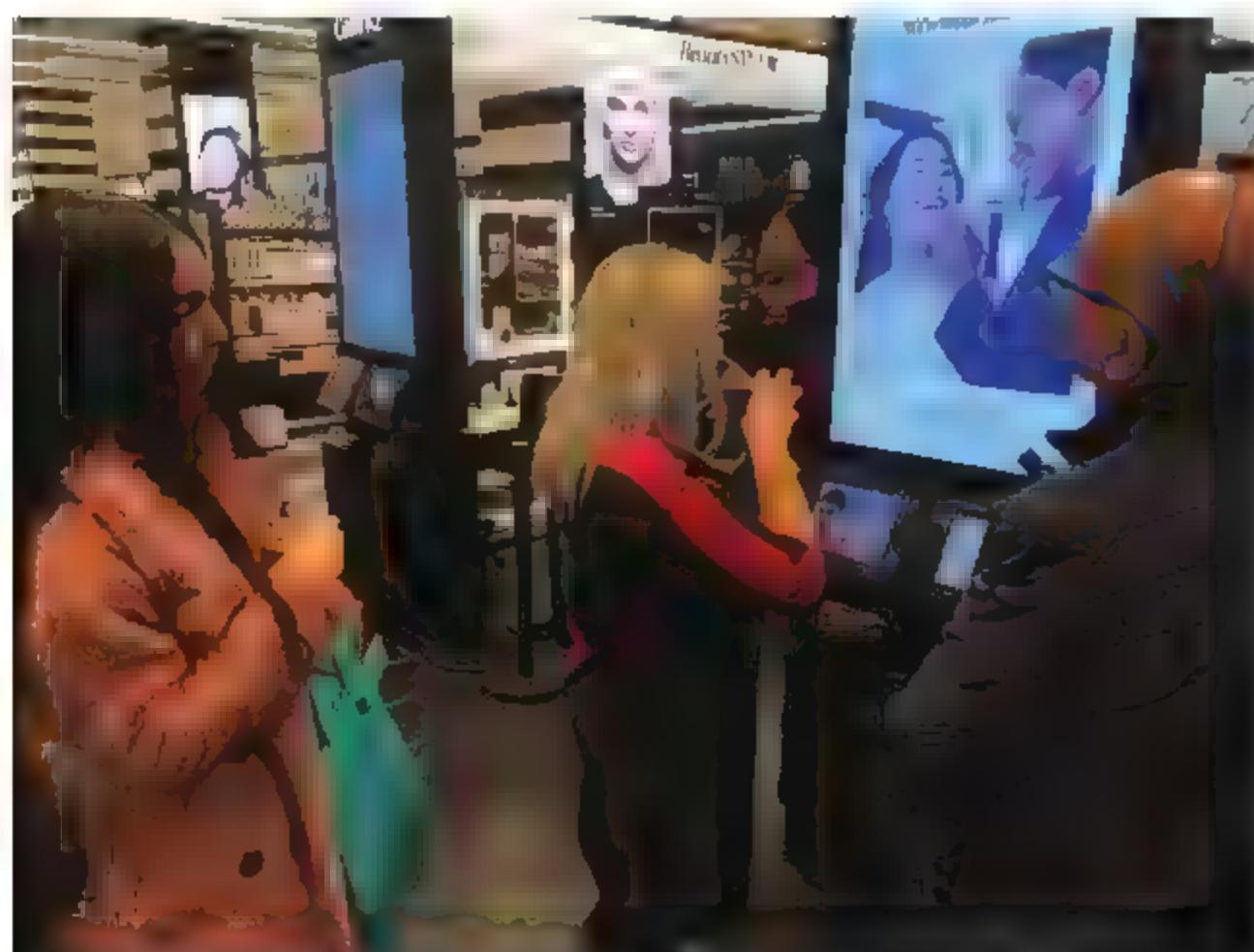


all distinctive offerings with a unique concept and focused purpose. These stores offer unique products and buying experiences not found elsewhere.

CHANGE

Retailers built to capitalize on rapidly changing consumer behaviors and trends are winners. The future belongs to the fast movers and their ability to adapt their business models. Story is an example of a store that changes its entire product offerings many times during the year. Nike's flagship store is another example where customers can buy online and pick-up in store in their own, secure locker. This allows the shoppers to grab and go.

Retail Store Tours (retailstoretours.com) is a division of the CIM Tours, a proven innovation guide for global organizations. Consumers in Motion Tours (CIM Tours) translates an organization's business objectives into new technologies and partnership so that companies can innovate and stay ahead of ever-changing consumer expectations.



• Sephora, the Paris, France-based multinational chain of personal care and beauty stores.

A Regulatory Train Wreck We all Saw Coming

First announced by FDA in 2014, mandatory testing of premium hand-rolled cigars for harmful, and potentially harmful substances, has been at a standstill and deadlock ever since.

>**BY CRAIG WILLIAMSON**

For whatever odd reason, disaster sometimes seems remarkably inevitable. Everyone sees the problem and everyone talks about the problem, perhaps days, weeks, months, or even years in advance. But, for some reason, disaster still strikes. As we turn the page and welcome 2019, the cigar industry is staring at a regulatory train wreck that we all saw coming.

Cigar and pipe tobacco manufacturers, along with producers of other newly-regulated tobacco products, face a looming November deadline to submit test results for Harmful and Potentially Harmful Constituents (HPHCs).

HPHCs are constituents (such as chemicals, compounds, and ingredients) in tobacco products FDA believes are harmful or potentially harmful to health. Due to the Food & Drug Administration's far-reaching "Deeming Rule," by this November manufacturers of cigars and pipe tobacco must submit to FDA the results of HPHC testing for every SKU.

There are more than a handful of problems with this new requirement, starting with the fact that FDA has yet to identify for which HPHCs we must test.

There are 20 HPHCs that cigarette manufacturers must test for and submit to FDA; for smokeless tobacco, there are nine. With less than 10 months before a government-imposed deadline to conduct testing, FDA has not even told cigar and pipe tobacco manufacturers which HPHCs they need to test for.

That's only the start, however.

Not only as FDA failed to identify which HPHCs must be tested for, FDA has also failed to provide any recognized or specified methodology. In other words, we don't know how to do the test in a way the FDA will recognize and accept.

To make matters worse, there are a limited number of laboratories in the United States certified to conduct any FDA testing. These labs are already facing the heavy burden of testing for previously-regulated products, as well as the significant number of new e-cigarette products for which HPHC testing is being conducted.

At this point, it is increasingly unlikely that the tests can be completed by the deadline.

However, the lack of information about which HPHCs to test for, how to conduct the tests, and the ability of labs to meet the deadline is still, surprisingly, only part of the problem.

>**At this point, it is increasingly unlikely that tests can be completed by the deadline.**

The heart of the matter is the unfair and undue burden that this rule puts on the cigar industry. Once again, FDA has failed to account for the unique nature of our industry. The rule also appears to be at odds with FDA's stated willingness to review the appropriate regulatory treatment of premium cigars, including the possibility of an exemption from some or all regulation.

Cigars are not like other tobacco products and HPHC testing as currently required by FDA is not easily applicable to the way cigars are produced. The FDA rule requires every SKU to go through testing. Cigars come in different shapes and sizes, resulting in a much wider variety of products and a vast number of SKUs. There are anywhere between 15,000 and 20,000 unique cigar SKUs on the market, compared to the roughly 100

cigarette SKUs that make up over 90 percent of the market.

The wide variety of products and vast number of SKUs makes HPHC testing an incredibly costly burden for cigar and pipe tobacco manufacturers. This testing will easily cost the industry at large tens of millions of dollars.

The FDA itself has acknowledged the unique nature of the cigar industry and, again, has said it is considering an exemption for premium cigars.

With the FDA considering such an exemption, and the underlying question of just how to define a "premium" cigar, it does not make sense to require the cigar segment to conduct testing that may not even apply to some part of the industry. Given the well-established difficulties of this testing, as well as the cost, what reason is there for the cigar industry to go through the burden and incur the expense—perhaps unnecessarily? Thus far, the answer from FDA is silence.

This entire train wreck, and all of the consequences that flow from it, were very much predictable. The Cigar Association of America warned FDA that

HPHC testing for cigars would be problematic all the way back in 2014, two years before the deeming rule was even finalized.

Since last summer, we have been communicating with FDA about our concerns. We have asked FDA on several occasions to extend the testing deadline for all of the reasons laid out here. As of this writing, FDA has refused.

CAA will not stop fighting. As the industry's leading voice, we will continue to advocate on behalf of the entire industry. We hope FDA will finally see that this is, indeed, ■ train wreck—even if they didn't see it coming down the tracks.

Craig Williamson is president of the Cigar Association of America, Tel: (202) 223-8204, Web: cigarassociation.org.



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A pipe tobacco display at Telford's Pipe & Tobacco in Mill Valley, Calif., which is now subject to a flavored tobacco ban enacted by Marin County in November 2018. The ordinance was directed at youth access to flavored e-cigarettes and e-liquids, despite the fact that California's legal purchase age is 21. But, about 20 percent of Telford's business comes from the sale of flavored pipe tobacco, plus flavored premium cigars, now jeopardizing the store's very existence.

restrictions on flavored tobacco products limited to California. Three thousand miles to the east in Massachusetts, it has been even worse. Massachusetts became the sixth state to raise the age of purchase for tobacco products to 21 at the end of 2018. While there have been over 60 local tobacco restriction proposals in California, there have been more than twice that number proposed or adopted in Massachusetts.

As legislative sessions begin in 2019, state bills have been introduced not only in California, but in New Mexico, which has bills to ban flavored tobacco products and tripling the tax on smokeless tobacco, cigars and pipe tobacco. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced in early January that he intends to propose a ban on flavored products and there could be similar legislative proposals in other states.

These threats are real. Regardless of where they are located, business owners everywhere need to do at least two things now. First, all affected businesses must work together to ensure their collective voice is heard. Second, retailers must individually contact and get to know their local and state elected officials. One of the most effective ways to be heard by lawmakers is to establish a relationship with them and educate them about the retail tobacco business before a legislative proposal is introduced. Retailers need to become a part of the political and legislative process in order to protect their livelihoods.

Thomas Briant is executive director of the National Association of Tobacco Outlets (NATO), Toll-free: (866) 869-8888, Web: www.natocentral.org.

Local & State Flavor Bans on Cigars and Pipe Tobacco

A frantic rush to keep flavored vaping products out of the hands of underage users has put traditional pipe and cigar shops in jeopardy when flavor bans are proposed. Retailers must consider the potential threat before it's at their doorstep. **BY THOMAS BRIANT**

Every retailer that sells tobacco products, even if your business specializes in selling cigars or pipe tobacco, needs to be very concerned about local, state, and federal efforts to restrict or even prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products. The main focus of these proposed restrictions or sales ban is on youth initiation and use of flavored products.

However, the lack of any scientific proof demonstrating that flavored products cause youth initiation has not stopped hundreds of local governments across the country from pursuing legislation that restricts or bans the sale of flavored tobacco products. Nine times out of ten, those proposals also ban flavored smokeless tobacco, flavored cigars, and pipe tobacco.

The most recent push for banning flavored tobacco products in California started in the City of Sonoma in 2015. Then, by the end of 2016, Contra Costa County adopted a ban and the idea began to spread.

Other cities also enacted restrictions of flavored tobacco products including Oakland and then San Francisco. Soon after, the number of local governments considering flavored tobacco ordinances began increasing. At the end of 2018, over

60 local governments in California passed, attempted to pass, or had begun the process of considering ordinances to restrict flavored tobacco products. These local governments now include Sacramento and Los Angeles. Also, Senate Bill 38 was recently introduced in the California state legislature that would ban the sale of flavored tobacco products statewide.

Proponents claim that flavor bans are needed to protect children. They do not acknowledge, however, that flavored products are not the reason why minors initiate or illegally use these products. In addition, in 2016, California raised the legal age to purchase tobacco products to 21. Raising the legal age to purchase tobacco should negate the necessity of restricting or banning flavored tobacco products.

For these reasons, these bills are not about protecting children, but rather are intended to ban an otherwise legal class of tobacco products for adults. However, the bans not only prohibit adults from exercising their freedoms, they encourage illicit sales and threaten the existence of law-abiding, taxpaying businesses and the jobs that they create.

By no means is this effort to impose



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General Snus Unveils Fresh New Look

General Snus, the number one selling snus in the world, has rolled out reinvigorated branding featuring bright and modern colors, an updated shield graphic, and redesigned in-store signage.

The new branding resulted from a collaborative process that involved both Swedish Match North America and European marketing teams and their agency partners. "We wanted this next generation of packaging to honor the past and look modern at the same time," said Joe Ackerman, director of new products for Swedish Match.

The look was designed to continue this momentum by increasing brand recognition and visibility in retail stores, said Ackerman. "The enhancements will help consumers more easily select their preferred style of General and improve the already premium experience the product provides."

Swedish Match USA, Richmond, Va., Tel: (804) 787-5100, Web: swedishmatch.com.

Fontem's Salt of the Earth Nicotine Salt E-liquids

Fontem ventures, owner of the leading vapor brand, blu, has introduced Salt of the Earth, a range of nicotine salt e-liquids that marks the company's entry into the refillable liquids segment, one of the fastest-growing product segments in the e-vapor market today.

Fontem worked closely with Purilum, an established manufacturer of e-juice concentrates, to develop the new line. Purilum utilizes an unparalleled approach to developing its e-liquid flavors at the molecular level, building them from scratch and leveraging ingredients that are individually selected and tested for compliance with quality standards, said Fontem in an announcement.

Designed for vapers who use refillable pod-style devices, Salt of the Earth is offered in five unique flavors (The Classic, Orchard, Just Menthol, Bee's Milk, and Lady Camellia) in a choice of two different nicotine strengths (24mg/ml or 50mg/ml), packaged in 30ml dropper-top bottles. Suggested retail, \$18.99 per bottle.

Fontem Ventures, Charlotte N.C., Email: info@fontemventures.com, Web: fontemventures.com.



Vapage Premium E-liquid Gift Sampler

Spark Vapor offers a six-bottle gift sampler, featuring two bottles from each of its three premium e-liquid lines. These e-liquids have been thoughtfully developed and "sub-ohm" optimized to deliver a truly enjoyable vaping experience. They are crafted for today's sub-ohm tanks and drip systems to deliver outstanding flavor and vapor production. They feature 60/40 pg/vg blends for "incredible" taste and vapor production. Each kit contains one 15ml bottle of each the following flavors, at 3mg nicotine:

- **Blind Lion Night Cap:** Tart granny smith apples with a sweet candy shell;
- **Blind Lion Scofflaw:** Rich layers of molasses, pure vanilla and warm brown sugar;
- **Vapage Premium Frosted Donut:** The appealing taste of freshly-made donuts;
- **Vapage Premium Strawberry Yogurt:** Yogurt with fresh strawberries;
- **Vapage Private Reserve Liberty:** A smooth, rich, "free blend" utilizing a variety of attributes from different tobaccos to produce one-of-a-kind a profile;
- **Vapage Private Reserve Fresho:** Cool peppermint rounds out a satisfying tobacco foundation;

Spark Industries LLC, Camarillo, Calif., Tel: (805) 309-2400, Web: SparkVaporBrands.com.

NJOY's Ace: Long Lasting Pod-Based Vape System

The recently-launched NJOY Ace pod-based vape system features a long-lasting, rechargeable battery and easy-to-use flavor pods that deliver a satisfying nicotine salt formula, designed to satisfy both first-time or experienced vapers.

The high quality device, which retails for \$7.99 and includes a micro USB power cord, features an ergonomic design made for a more natural grip and draw and durable construction, featuring a magnetic pod system that prevents leaks and spills.

With an easy draw, strong yet smooth hit, great tasting flavors, and long-lasting battery power, NJOY Ace was designed for a longer-lasting experience.

The system's larger 1.9 mL pods were engineered with size in mind, and contain 200 percent more liquid than leading competitor pods. The consumer gets 325 puffs per pod, as many as one pack of cigarettes, and should last a full day. Each pod contains 5 percent nicotine by weight. Like all NJOY e-liquids, Ace pods are formulated and blended in the U.S. with domestic and imported ingredients and pharmaceutical-grade vegetable glycerin, propylene glycol and nicotine.

NJOY Ace flavor pods are available in four flavors—Watermelon Twist, Blueberry, Cool Menthol, and Classic Tobacco. They are sold in two-packs with a suggested retail price of \$9.99.

NJOY, Scottsdale, Ariz., Tel: (480) 305-7950, Email: sales@njoy.com, Web: njoy.com.



On-Nicotine, Tobacco-Free Nicotine Pouches

On! is a 100 percent tobacco-free oral pouch containing only nicotine salt and ingredients used in foods and food supplements. Produced in Helsingborg, Sweden, it delivers clean, fast, and stimulating enjoyment that can be used any time. There's no need to chew; users just place a fresh pouch up under their lip, against their gum.



The nicotine used in the On! pouches is extracted from tobacco plants and crystallized into nicotine salt. Other ingredients include sweeteners, fillers, and flavors, but no tobacco in any form—either cut, ground, powder, or leaf tobacco.

There are seven specially blended flavors (wintergreen, mint, cinnamon, coffee, citrus, berry, and original), and five nicotine levels (1mg, 2mg, 3mg, 4mg, and 8mg). Each can contains 20 pouches, and has a freshness shelf life of 16 months. Refrigeration is not necessary. An extra compartment in each can provides a convenient and responsible method for the disposal of each used pouch.

On! Nicotine, Miramar, Fla., Tel: (866) 986-9924, Email: info@on-nicotine.com, Web: on-nicotine.com.



Thunder XTreme, the First Strong Snus available in the U.S., is Launched by Swedish Match

There has been an unmet consumer demand for a strong snus option in the U.S. To meet it, Swedish Match has launched Thunder Xtreme in the U.S., a bold new product line featuring three varieties, two flavors, and two strengths.

"Bringing Thunder Xtreme to the states represents the first snus innovation in five years, and it positions us to own 100 percent of the strong snus category," said Joe Ackerman, director of new products for Swedish Match. "Now, with our V2 Tobacco acquisition, we can introduce the grandfathered Thunder Xtreme products to the U.S. market and satisfy consumer's ever-changing needs."

There are now three varieties offered: Original, Original Strong, and Red Strong. The two strong options are 50 percent stronger than regular strength snus, making them the only strong snus products in the U.S. market. The cans, easily identified by premium packaging with a large X and subtle flair, contain 24 one-gram pouches delivering "long-lasting enjoyment" and provide a compartment for easy pouch disposal.

Swedish Match USA, Richmond, Va., Tel: (804) 787-5100, Web: swedishmatch.com.

► Backwoods All-Natural Pouch Pipe Tobaccos from Sutliff Tobacco Company

National brand foundation blends never go out of style, and Backwoods all-natural pipe tobaccos, made in the U.S. by Sutliff Tobacco Company, offer retailers a great opportunity with a brand that has strong consumer recognition.

Backwoods Cherry

■ a mixture of toasted Black Cavendish with bright Virginia added and topped with a subtle cherry flavor for an "exceptional smoke."

Backwoods Buttered Rum is a mix of Gold Virginias and mellow White Burleys. This Cavendish-style blend is topped with a subtle mixture of New England and Jamaican Rums that proves to be extremely satisfying.

Backwoods Black and Gold ■ a delightful blend of rich Burleys, tangy Virginias, and the world-famous Green River Black Cavendish, expertly blended for extremely satisfying smoke.

Backwoods Original is a unique rugged cut, blended with the finest aromatic Burley and Virginia tobaccos available. Always a smooth smoke without a bite.

All mixtures are available in 1.5 ounce pouches, packed in counter-top display boxes of six pouches. Call for pricing.



Sutliff Tobacco Company/Mac Baren

Tobacco, Richmond, Va.,

Tel: (704) 796-3520, Email:
kdinkins@sutliff-tobacco.com,
Web: sutliff-tobacco.com.



► Shisha Tech's Amira Hookahs in Magnet or Twist Models

Amira Hookahs from Shisha Tech are offered in a choice of either "Magna" technology or the newly-launched "Click" technology. Magna technology hookahs connect the stem and glass vase using a magnet. Click technology hookahs connect the stem and glass vase with a quarter twist lock. There are over 12 different designs featuring a variety of materials, finishes, and details ranging in size from 16 to 36 inches and retailing from \$89.99 to \$229.90. Each model is offered in up to six different colors.

Depending upon the model, Almira hookahs feature stainless steel tubes; downstems made from aerospace-grade aluminum, stainless steel, or wood; matte powder finish or polished Krylon two-hose-capable aluminum stems; heavy aluminum or tempered glass trays; glass vases; silicone hoses; washable medical-grade matte silicone hoses; and clay bowls.

Shisha Tech also owns the Anahi Glass Hookah line, and offers an extensive line of premium hookah products and accessories including charcoal, bowls, hoses, and other miscellaneous accessories.

Shisha Tech, Glendale, Calif.,
Web: shisatech.com.

► Classic Savinelli Shapes in New Regimental Series

Warm and elegant, the Regimental series from Italy's Savinelli Pipes offers 11 different time-honored shapes from the Savinelli catalogue finished in deep ruby-hued palettes and adorned with clean, bright yellow acrylic accents for a touch of flash. With both smooth dark walnut stained finishes (\$125 retail) and red-hued stained sandblasted finishes (\$115 retail), together with rich ruby-chocolate "Bordeaux" mouthpieces, the Regimental is poised to become the next great seller in any pipe shop. Shapes include 101, 128, and 315 Billiards; 207 Apple; 310 Poker; 321 Author; 602, 614, and 616KS Bent Billiards; 624KS Bulldog, and 626 Bent Apple.

Savinelli S.R.L., Milan, Italy, Web: savinelli.it; distributed in the U.S. by **Laudisi Enterprises, Inc.**, Little River, S.C., Tel: (843) 491-4150, Email: Sales@laudisi.com, Web: laudisi.com.



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Diesel Whiskey Row Bourbon Barrel-Aged Cigars

Whiskey Row, a collection of premium cigars blended by A.J. Fernandez under the Diesel brand for General Cigar was developed in partnership with Rabbit Hole Bourbon, a maverick new distillery making its mark on the bourbon category.

In a unique characteristic, Whiskey Row cigars are bound with leaves aged in bourbon barrels, using a proprietary process developed by Fernandez.

The tobacco is left to rest inside the barrels while the amount of air inside is controlled at regular intervals to ensure the bourbon flavors are imparted evenly. Aging the binder leaf in the bourbon barrels added an unexpected layer of flavor and aroma right beneath the wrapper, the company says.

Diesel Whiskey Row features a three-region blend of Nicaraguan tobaccos from Ometepe, Condega, and Jalapa, each aged five to eight years and bound in the bourbon-barrel-aged Mexican binder. The entire blend is wrapped in Ecuadoran Habano which is aged for five years.

The blend is described as a very "versatile" medium-bodied smoke that "plays well with bourbon and other complementary flavors," according to the manufacturer. It is available in four sizes, each presented in 25-count boxes: Robusto (5 1/2 x 52), \$7.49 each suggested retail; Toro (6 x 54), \$7.99 each; Churchill (7 x 49) \$8.49 each; and Gigante (6 x 60), \$8.99 each.

Since its unveiling at the 2018 IPCPR Trade Show, Diesel Whiskey Row has been supported by in-store events featuring pairings with Rabbit Hole Bourbon at select retail accounts.

General Cigar Company, Glenn Allen, Va., Tel: (804) 935-2809, Web: dieselm cigar.com.



Swedish Match Adds Night Owl, Tipped Pipe Tobacco Cigars

Swedish Match has launched Night Owl, an innovative new pipe tobacco cigar. An extension of the company's White Owl brand, these tipped pipe tobacco cigars are packaged in the company's freshness-guaranteed resealable FoilFresh pouch.

Previously only sold in Kansas, Missouri, Wawa, and Circle K stores, Night Owl pipe tobacco cigars are now available nationwide in four flavors: Classic, Wine, Tropical and Black Cherry. The flavor profiles selected for the launch are aligned with the top segment flavors, and were tested and approved by consumers.

"The pipe tobacco cigar category is a unique one with tremendous opportunity," said Michael Lowzinski, assistant brand at Swedish Match. "This particular segment of cigars has experienced slower growth and less innovation, but we fully expect the introduction of Night Owl cigars to change the forecast."

Night Owl is available in a variety of formats, including "2 for 99 cents," "Save on four-packs," and "Limited-Edition" pairings with White Owl Spiked Lemonade and Game Blue Raspberry cigars. The cigars are packed in 15-count vertical display cartons.

Swedish Match USA, Richmond, Va., Tel: (804) 787-5100, Web: swedishmatch.com, nightowlcigar.com.

Mombacho Debuts Casa Favilli with Nicaraguan-Grown Broadleaf Wrapper

Mombacho Cigars S.A. has begun producing a new Nicaraguan broadleaf cigar. Named Casa Favilli after Mombacho's factory in Granada, Nicaragua, it is described as the first-ever Nicaraguan Broadleaf cigar.

It is the third core line cigar in the Mombacho Cigars portfolio and continues the company's tradition of producing 100 percent Nicaraguan puros. The blend consists of a Nicaraguan-grown Broadleaf wrapper with binder and filler tobaccos from Jalapa and Condega. Casa Favilli's wrapper has never been used before, the company says.

The cigar is described as being on the full side of the strength spectrum, and will be available in 12-count boxes and in three sizes: Robusto (5 x 50), \$10.95 each suggested retail; Toro (6 x 52), \$11.95 each; and Torpedo (5 1/2 x 52), \$12.95 each. The cigars will be in regular production starting in 2019.

Mombacho Cigars S.A., Cocoa, Fla., Tel: (510) 693-1714
Email: rob@mombachocigars.com,
Web: mombachocigars.com.



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► New Water Tower and Countertop Displays from Drew Estate; Tins Now Include Boveda Packs

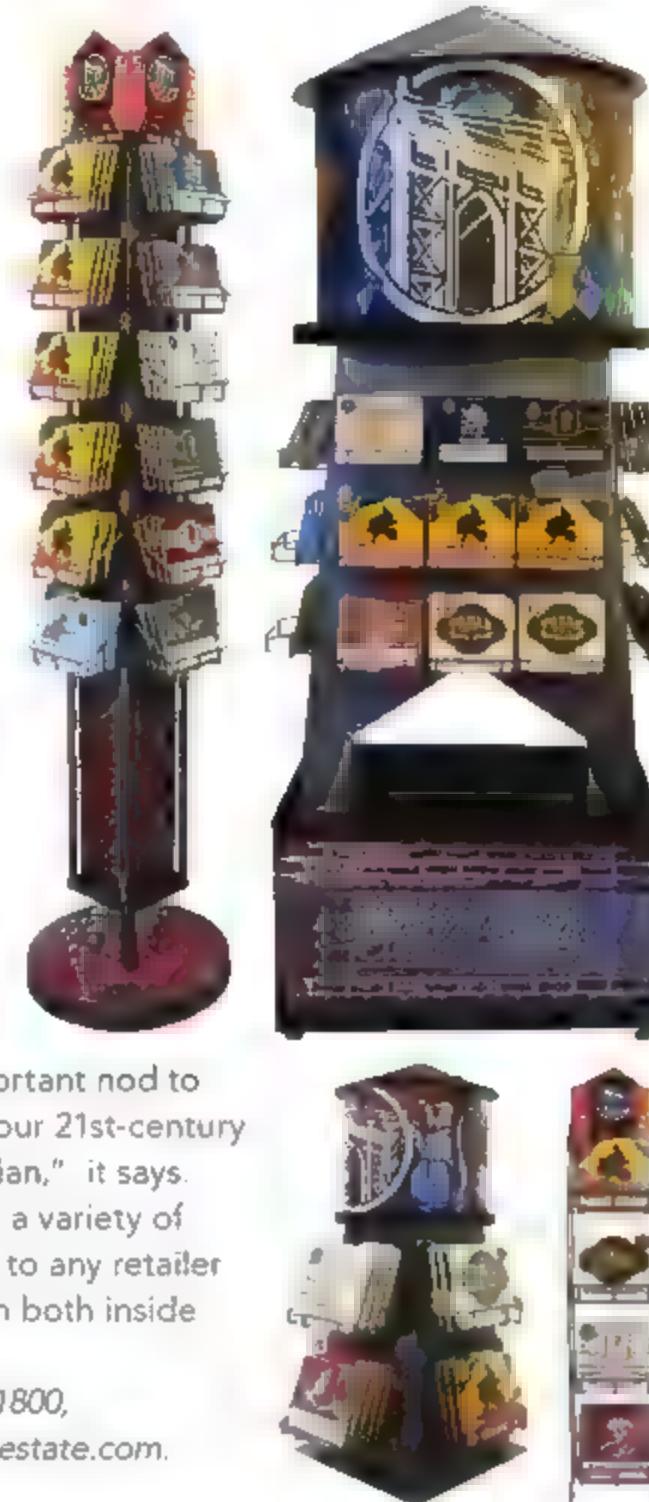
The newest additions to the 4 ■ 32 Tin Collection from Drew Estate are now shipping nationwide, along with four varieties of custom displays.

And there is a new quality feature for all Drew Estate Tins: They will feature Boveda "active humidification" packs inside to allow for placement anywhere in the retail environment. This will ensure optimum product freshness and a significantly longer shelf life outside the retail humidor.

The Drew Estate 4 ■ 32 Tin Collection was designed to transcend the entire Drew Estate brand portfolio into the quick-and-easy, "fast smoke" space, says the company. This three-step process includes reaching all taste palates through Drew's wide variety of brands; merchandising the collection in all premium cigar shops across the world in an easily "Drew" recognizable fashion; and keeping the product "fresh and clean" with an important nod to tradition. "Our water tower concept is our 21st-century expression of the iconic cigar store Indian," it says.

In addition, Drew Estate is shipping a variety of merchandising display options tailored to any retailer store size to showcase the tin collection both inside and outside the humidor.

Drew Estate, Miami, Fla., Tel: (786) 581-1800, Email: info@drewestate.com, Web: drewestate.com.



New Sizes Offered in General Cigar's Macanudo Inspirado Line

General Cigar Company has added the first new vitola to its Macanudo Inspirado White line, the Robusto Tubo. This classic 5 x 50 robusto is presented in a protective aluminum tube. With bold branding elements, the white and silver tubo is both eye-catching and practical. Inspirado White features four-year-aged Nicaraguan and Mexican San Andres filler and a six-year-aged Ecuadorian Connecticut wrapper. Suggested retail is \$7.49 per cigar, 20 cigars per box.

Also new is the Macanudo Inspirado Black Tubo (4-5/8 x 48), featuring an impressive black and silver tube design. The cigar is rolled from a blend of Nicaraguan fillers with a dark, oily Connecticut Broadleaf wrapper. Suggested retail is \$7.99 per cigar, 20 cigars per box.

General Cigar Company, Glenn Allen, Va., Tel: (804) 935-2809, Web: cigarworld.com.



Coco Blue Limited Edition Swisher Sweets Cigarillos

Swisher Sweets Coco Blue cigarillos are the latest limited-edition release in Swisher International's Swisher Sweet cigarillos line. The cigarillos feature a combination of "tangy blueberry and creamy coconut" flavors that deliver "a blast off to a taste sensation." The release is available for a limited time in "2 for 99¢," "Save on 2," and "2 for \$1.49," price points in resealable two-count "Sealed Fresh" pouches.

Swisher International, Jacksonville, Fla., Toll-free: (800) 874-9720, Web: swisher.com.

Montego from Ligget Vector Brands

Ligget Vector Brands had one goal with Montego: to provide great American-made cigarettes at an ultra-discount price. The brand is now available in California, Minnesota, Mississippi, and Texas in nine popular Kings and 100s box styles including Blue, Menthol Gold, Menthol Silver, Orange, and Red.



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► David P. Ehrlich PLM, Maduro Line Extension from MLB Cigar Ventures

Paying homage to the beloved Paul Leo Macdonald, who owned the David P. Ehrlich Tobacconist in Chicago for 40 years, MLB Cigar Ventures has launched the second blend under the David P. Ehrlich label with the PLM Series. Company founder and owner Mike Bellody again teamed up with cigar maker Ernesto Perez-Carrillo of Tabacalera La Alianza to create his first maduro. "It is a truly special cigar with incredible complexities and a superior flavor profile," Bellody explains, "medium to full, yet very refined and elegant. This blend continues our mission to provide an exceptional and unique smoking experience for cigar lovers everywhere."

Bellody says PLM's Nicaraguan and Dominican fillers and Nicaraguan binder are very similar to those of the original David P. Ehrlich Tercero, but paired with a San Andres Maduro wrapper rather than Tremont's Ecuador Sumatra wrapper. It is offered in five sizes: Corona (5 1/2 x 44), Robusto (5 x 52), Toro (6 x 50), Gordo (6 x 60), and Churchill (7 x 47).

In addition, Bellody has partnered with Enrique Seijas of Maltide Cigars to form Sable Distribution, enabling him to take MLB distribution in-house once again.

MLB Cigar Ventures, West Bridgewater, Mass., Tel: (508) 682-1240, Email: mlbcigarventures@gmail.com, Web: MLBCigarVentures.com.



► Black Label Trading Adds Two New Cigars in the Deliverance line

Black Label Trading Company (BLTC) is now shipping its Deliverance Nocturne and Deliverance Porcelain cigars to select retail accounts. Nocturne and Porcelain are hand-crafted at BLTC's own factory, Fabrica Oveja Negra, in Esteli, Nicaragua.

Deliverance Nocturne features a Pennsylvania Broadleaf wrapper with Pennsylvania ligero and Nicaraguan filler and binder and is offered in two sizes: Perfecto (5 x 56), presented in 20-count boxes, and Short Salomon "Snub Nose" (4 3/4 x 40 x 56), presented in 18-count boxes. Both sizes retail at \$10.50 each.

Deliverance Porcelain features a Connecticut wrapper, Nicaraguan Habano binder, and Nicaragua and Pennsylvania filler and is offered in a single Corona Gorda (5 1/2 x 48) size in 16-count boxes, retailing at \$10 per stick. **Black Label Trading Co.**, Cameron, Texas, Tel: (210) 317-1198, Email: info@BlackLabelTrading.com, Web: blacklabeltrading.com; distributed by **Boutiques Unified**, Vineland, N.J., Tel: (856) 692-7425, Email: info@BoutiquesUnified.com, Web: boutiquesunified.com.

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► Starr Chewing Tobacco Unveils Upgraded Packaging Design

Red, white, and blue—the colors of America—remain the foundation of new packaging graphics for Swisher International's Starr brand of loose-leaf chewing tobacco that now evokes a great national flag theme. The new packaging was designed to generate customer excitement and to boost business for retailers.

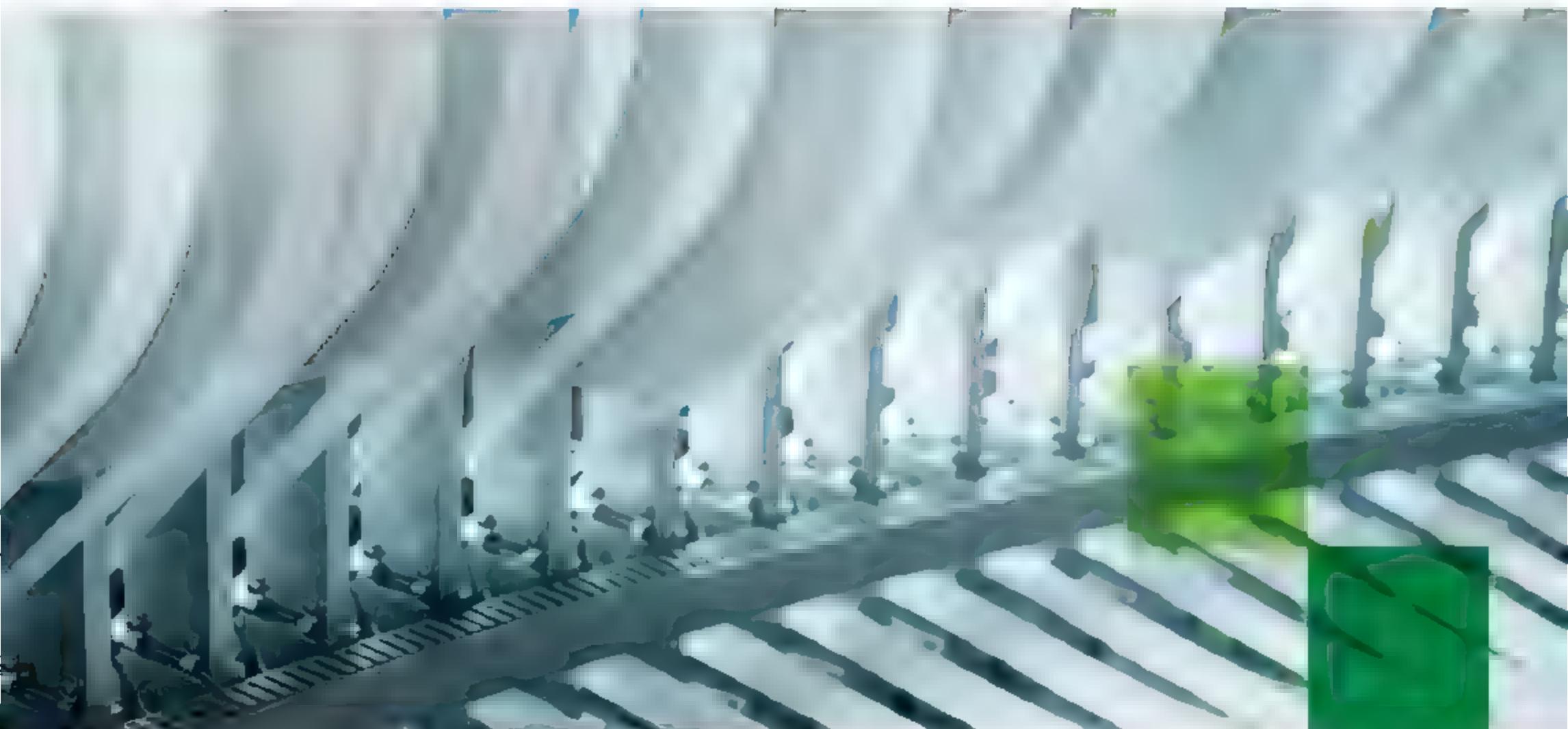
Swisher reports that with solid margins and competitive price points, Starr sells three times more per store than the leading manufacturer. Manufactured in the U.S.A., Starr is backed with a 100% freshness guarantee and supported by the Swisher sales team.

Swisher International,
Jacksonville, Fla., Toll-free: (800) 874-9720,
Email: customerservice@swisher.com,
Web: Swisher.com.



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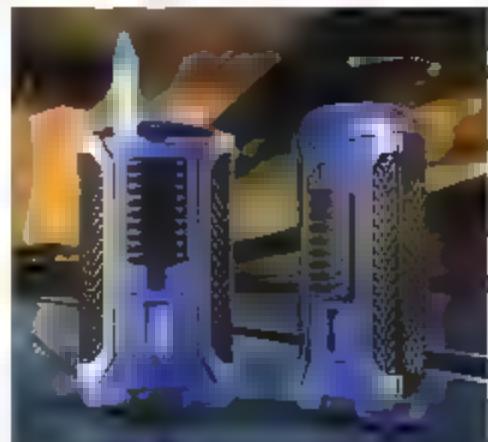
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>Auto Racing Inspires Colibri's New Apex Jet Flame Lighter

Drawing inspiration from auto racing, the Apex Jet Flame Lighter from Colibri is named for the point at which the driver increases the throttle for the fastest exit out of a turn. Powered by a robust single-jet flame, the Apex lighter is lit by a single-action push-up trigger. Air intakes on the front and side feed oxygen to the burners. The fuel window is reflectively tinted blue and positioned on the front of the body for quick butane fuel level readings. A roll cage wraps from the front to the back of the body to help protect the painted body when placed on a tabletop or other surface. A pachmayr pattern covers the sides and back of the body to provide a secure grip while handling, and a large fuel adjustment dial on the bottom easily moderates the flame height. Colors available are metallic black, charcoal, metallic red, metallic blue, orange, and green. Apex has a two-year warranty and a \$59 suggested retail price; a gift box is included.

Colibri, New York, N.Y., Tel: (347) 415-8562, Email: sales@colibri.com. Web: colibri.com.



>Airio Disposable Cigarette Micro Filters are the World's Smallest

The Airio Micro filter unobtrusively removes most of the tar and other toxic additives found in cigarettes. It adds only 3/4 of an inch to a cigarette, considered the world's smallest cigarette filter, according to distributor Smokey Mountain Snuff. The Airio's filter system works by cyclonic action with no moving parts or airflow impediment. Simply slip one Airio micro-filter on the filtered end of a cigarette. Small and discreet, the filter is easy-drawing. Each carton contains 20 filter tips, and each tip can be used on up to three full-flavor



Smokey Mountain Snuff, South Jordan, Utah, Tel: (800) 762-2439, Web: smokeysnuff.com.

cigarettes without sacrificing taste or flavor. This low-cost /high gross profit product makes a great impulse item, and comes in attractive 12-count counter-friendly displays.

>HumiForm 50V: A Cigar Humidifier Users "Wet and Forget"

A rustic-looking product aimed at the consumer who wants a low maintenance humidifying solution, HumiForm 50V Cigar Humidifier humidifies cigars without the need for regular maintenance. The slogan for HumiForm is "Wet It and Forget It," says Damon DeBusk, founder of Origineer Design. Partially fabricated and assembled in the U.S., the unit uses a rope-like filament for humidifying instead of typical sponges, beads, or pouches that look like they don't belong in your humidor, explains DeBusk. "The bow tie design works well and distributes humidity evenly in the 70 percent relative humidity range." Users expose more filament depending on how much water vapor they want to be released. "Best of all, you won't have to touch it for almost a year in some cases," says DeBusk. There is no need for electricity or batteries with HumiForm. It's simple and features a nostalgic look. Suggested retail, \$65.

Origineer Design LLC, Center Valley, Penn., Tel: (610) 212-5985, Email: damon@origineer.com, Web: origineer.com.



>Duke V Serrated Cigar Cutter Triple Flame Lighter from Lotus

There's nothing else like it on the market. The new Lotus Duke V Triple Flame Lighter features a triple pinpoint wind-resistant torch flame and an integrated 60 ring gauge V cigar cutter with serrated 440 stainless steel blade. The lighter is equipped with a single action ignition, tinted fuel level window, and lights to an altitude of 8,000 feet above sea level. The all-metal housing is offered in black matte, antique pewter, or antique copper finishes. Suggested retail price, \$69.95.

Lotus Group/Integral Logistics, Tamarac, Fla., Tel: (954) 746-9026, Email: Info@LotusLighters.com, Web: LotusLighters.com.



>XFlame Electronic Lighter from Xikar

Xikar's XFlame Lighter is a fully electronic, lithium battery-powered device that heats up rapidly and is rechargeable via USB cable. The burner is designed to evenly light up the entire foot of a cigar in seconds with minimal effort, up to a 62 ring gauge cigar in size. The easy-to-clean, and entirely replaceable burner coil (\$19.95) was developed with modern technology and engineered with advanced thermodynamics for a perfect light at the perfect temperature every time and won't overheat or damage cigar. Since it doesn't require butane or lighter fluid and is 100 percent windproof, it's ideal for traveling and high altitude use. The unit comes in a display package that includes a USB charging cable and a cleaning brush. Suggested retail is \$69.95, and includes a lifetime warranty on the battery and electronics.

**Xikar, Inc., Kansas City, Mo., Tel: (816) 474-7555,
Email: info@xikar.com, Web: xikar.com.**



>Colibri Adds Colorful Cut Camo

Colibri has expanded its Cut cigar cutter options with the Cut Camo, available in four new designs: Grey, Red, Orange, and Blue. This double guillotine cigar cutter features a graphic camo pattern, 440 stainless steel blades, a 62 ring gauge aperture for large cigars, spring-loaded release, ergonomic handles for a sure grip. The blades are black color-coated with a non-stick, easy-to-clean lacquer. Gift box included, and features a two-year warranty. Suggested retail, \$49.

**Colibri, New York, N.Y., Tel: (347) 415-8562,
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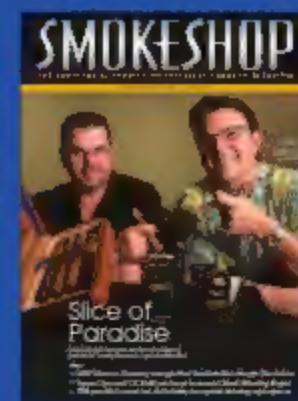
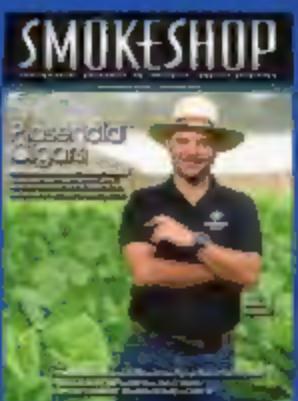
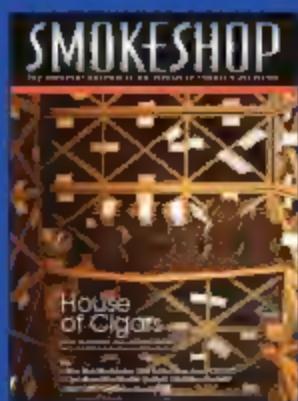
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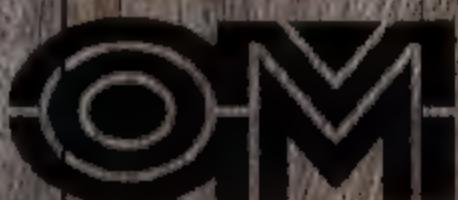


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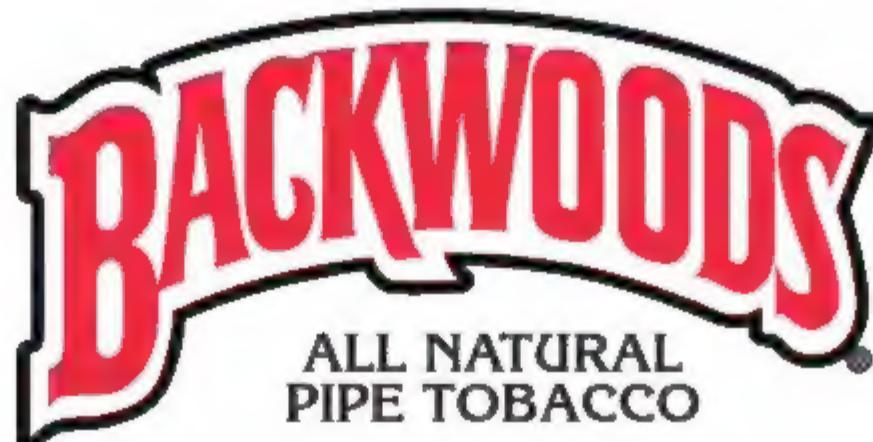
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